Episcopal Church lown and Lountry

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EPISCOPAL CHURCHERALS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

By //
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INTRODUCTION

THE Episcopal Church has not been foresighted or scientific in the administration and promotion of her work in rural areas. In the decades when there was a strong drift of population to the urban centers, she drifted with the flow of population. She relaxed her efforts in the country when, even in the face of diminishing returns, she should have made them more aggressive. Much of the growth of her city churches has been derived from the little churches in the villages and towns. The life of these little churches has been in jeopardy, because strong effort has not been made to recoup the losses sustained by these removals.

More than any other religious body, the Episcopal Church is thought of as a "city Church," and, while she cannot be proud of the title, she must admit that she has earned it. Of all the larger religious bodies in the United States the Episcopal Church stands at the head of the list as having the largest proportion of city members. The obverse of this fact is not so heartening, and herein she is culpable—she has the smallest proportion of rural members. By reason of this preponderant urban influence in her life, she has not formulated definite policies for rural work.

The Church has always had two very obvious and well-known deficiencies. The first one is that she lacks a distinctive method in her rural work. The only method generally used in her rural work is that which obtains in the city church. It has never fitted and it will not fit now. She is under the necessity of recognizing that there are great differences between the social characteristics of the city and the country town, and that in the work of the Church the two

demand that methods, technique, and emphases be different and distinctive.

The second one is her lack of policy in placing clergy in rural work. Placing has so often been done without regard for temper and qualifications. It is not argued that city priests cannot do acceptable work in the country. They can, and this is witnessed by the fact that many of our successful rural parishes today have been made successful by men born and reared in the city. But it is maintained that the church in the village and the town should have priests who are gifted with adaptability, resiliency of temper and imagination. They should also have such wholesome love for the life of the little town and open country that the work will hold for them some assurance of deep satisfaction and constant challenge.

The primary purpose of this book is to call attention to the need of the specific methods and emphases that should be applied to the work of the Church in the country town. The greater part of the rural work of the Episcopal Church is in the town, as distinguished from the village and the open country. The town work of the Church is especially significant at this time, as the recent population trends show that while the rural farm population has been declining, the village and town populations have not only shown a notable stability but have actually assumed a larger proportion of our national population. This growing importance of the town involves the necessity of its having new religious and social consideration.

In the most scientific and comprehensive study of present-day rural life, Rural Social Trends,* the authors say that "the churches . . . have felt the impact of changes in community and agricultural affairs. They are in the midst of and under the same necessities for making their own adjust-

^{*} See Bibliography, end of Introduction.

ments," but "it must be recorded, first of all, that rural churches have changed less than any other of the rural social institutions studied, except, perhaps, local government. In many places they have made fewer adjustments and made them less readily than have other organizations and institutions."

This book attempts to make possible a method for these adjustments in the Episcopal Church.

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CHAPTER I

THE RURAL PASTOR

THE Episcopal Church needs a fundamental conviction about the value of the opportunity of the rural Church. It can acquire this conviction only by beginning with the most fundamental factor in its life—the rural minister.

The rural Church of the future is almost wholly dependent upon the type of clergymen who work in the rural field. It is this fact alone that has made rural work so precarious a problem in the nation-wide work of the Church. Rural parishes all too rarely have the inherent stamina which will enable them to overcome the debilitating effects of clergymen who are not fitted for the rural ministry. This statement is not a condemnation of men. It is a charge against the Church, that she is so lacking in regard for her priests and for the people of her rural churches that she will, in a misalliance, make both of them suffer. The country is strewn with little churches in a moribund condition. While this condition is sometimes caused by inimical social and economic forces, such as those reflected by the symptom of depopulation, more frequently the explanation is found in the mistakes that have been made in placing clergy. Instead of rectifying the mistake by sending in men who are adapted to rural work, the churches were allowed to become less attractive. They developed into "problems," and from parish status they descended in the scale to mission stations. As the years went by, they became an increasing charge upon the missionary treasury of the diocese. Very few so-called "struggling missions" of the Church can fail to recall some era in their history when they were vigorous and flourishing parishes or missions. And they might still be centers of strength in the life of the Church if they had not at some time been given a setback that diverted them from the path of steady progress. The chief cause for the disintegration of many rural parishes has been the fact that men temperamentally unfit have been in charge of them. It is not uncommon to hear it said of a foreign missionary that he is at work building a new China or a new Africa, and that he is not only a minister but he is also a statesman and a builder of a new civilization. But it is uncommon to hear that some minister of the Church is a statesman and a builder of a new rural civilization.

Coupled with the recognition of the primary importance of the rural ministry, the Church also needs a new valuation of the rural field. The bigness of the rural opportunity does not inhere alone in geographical considerations. It lies, principally, in the number of people who live in the rural sections of the United States. Despite the growth of cities, over fifty millions of people still live on the farm and in the country town. More than one-third of the youth and more than one-half of the children under fifteen years of age in the United States are rural.

The quality and the numbers of clerical and lay leadership in city churches, drawn originally from rural churches, also attest to the bigness of the rural opportunity. All our city parishes would be immeasurably poorer if they did not have this rural strength in their life. This is not a threat, but is rather a statement of very solemn fact: that unless the country church is kept from a beggarly condition with respect to both men and measures, the whole life and mission of the Church will be seriously impaired.

There are trends in rural life making steadily for its deterioration. The reinforcing cultural and social agencies avail-

able to rural people are not sufficient in number or quality to keep rural people from being ingrown. Opportunities for an understanding and an expression of religion, in terms of modern thinking and current needs, are so deficient that rural areas now offer fertile fields for the development of strong tides of secularism. The growth of paganism in modern life is not confined to urban peoples. It is even more strongly rooted in rural life. And yet, in the country the problem can be faced and answered in a much more direct manner than is possible in the city. Rural people want religion. An irreligious attitude has not developed among them; it is simply nonreligious, and in their spiritual hunger they are reaching out for a Church which grants that religion has intellectual and cultural implications. They do not find this often enough in the organized religious expression in their midst. Let it be emphasized that they are not antagonistic, but that they do drift into an attitude which is much more devastating in its effects-that of indifference. The grave responsibility of building a new rural civilization faces the Church, and it must be met by laying new social and religious foundations. The old foundations are decaying. The social institutions of rural life, never adequate to the needs, have suffered grievously in these days of social and economic upheaval. Similarly, organized religion in rural areas has not adjusted itself to meet modern intellectual and social demands. As a vital force in rural life it is woefully inadequate. Failure to recognize these trends would bring real peril to the Church. A stern recognition of them would lead on to opportunities of great promise. It ill becomes present-day American Christianity to allow rural people, who constituted the principal original source of her spiritual vitality, to deteriorate in life and manners due to a failure to recognize the urgency of the rural field as the Church's primary missionary obligation.

Rural civilization has developed a psychosis of inferiority because of the domination of urban social attitudes in American life. The mind of the country people themselves is so much consumed by this inimical social psychology that they face living in the rural environment in a spirit of apathetic endurance, or that which is worse—self-pity. Their merits are obscured to them, and they have only a fragmentary realization of the possibilities of their own surroundings. The subtle elements in these social and religious aspects of rural life require that the rural minister have an unusual prescience of mind and soul. He should be specifically prepared to meet the specific conditions—religious, social, and economic—under which rural people live.

The Episcopal Church, because of the influence of its predominant city membership, has indirectly fostered an underestimation of the importance of its rural ministry. We have tacitly allowed our clergy to be classified as to their ability if they serve in the rural ministry. Many of our best men are deterred from staying in rural pastorates because they feel that by doing so they will be stigmatized professionally. Their efficiency and their spirit in work are circumscribed, and many men drift into that mounting tide of tragic shift and change which is becoming increasingly the undoing of the rural Church.

The rural ministry of the Episcopal Church should be made to encompass in its ideal the call to men of special fitness—for men who are willing to spend a life in the service of rural people. It must be repeated that the problems of rural life are different from the problems of urban life, and that the needs are particular. The ministry which appreciates this call is the only one which can give to the people of the country the quality of service and the consecration to the

task to which rural people have a right and of which they

have a thorough appreciation.

The work of the rural pastor will be considered specifically in the three traditional forms—administration, preaching, and pastoral work.

HIS ADMINISTRATION

It has already been intimated that the greatest factor militating against successful rural church work is the constant changes that take place in rural pastorates. This is psychologically harmful. To regard the rural field as a step towards bigger and better positions in the Church is unworthy of the sacred ministry. It is unnerving and inhibiting in its effects upon both pastor and people. The priest's anxiety about a change always keeps him from being settled and at work on plans for the immediate task. He lives and works on a kind of day-to-day basis, and he unconsciously denies himself the great tonic of a planned effort which can challenge his genius for constructive work.

The people of rural parishes have become accustomed to have their rectors stay with them for a brief time only. It is hard for them to believe that some day they may have one who will stay with them long enough to become a part of their life and their enterprise. The country parish should not be blamed altogether for the fact that its work is not progressive. It has small incentive when it is constantly subjected to a change in pastoral leadership. Many rural parishes, because of the peregrinating character of their ministers, have never been given an ideal of progressive parish work.

The length of time a clergyman should stay in a rural field is, of course, dependent upon many factors, but for the good of the parish itself—and, after all, the parish is the chief consideration—the time should not be less than five years. One of the most heartening things the people can learn when a new pastor comes to them is that he plans to stay with them for five years at least, and that he plans also to set about making a definite program to cover this period of his ministry. These elements of definiteness and concreteness, and the feeling that they are getting somewhere under pastoral leadership, can galvanize a group of people into constructive activity and give them courage and enthusiasm for their task. The administrative element in the rural pastor's work should be comprehended by a carefully planned parish program. The activity of individuals and organizations should be made to fit into a parish-wide endeavor. It must be a co-operative enterprise of pastor and people, and it must be built not only for the people but also built with them. In its inception it may be a very simple program. It is expected that it will grow. If it is planned with the people it will have the people working to carry it through.

The most practical place in which to begin the building of a parish program is the parish meeting. The parish, from the very beginning, should be taught that its corporate life is not to be confined to the Sunday morning service, and that even though corporate worship is the most important part of its life, it also has many other things to do which bring its members together. This is one shining instance in which the little country church has an advantage over the large city parish. In the large city church the size of the congregation makes this mutual interchange of ideas and planning impossible. It must depend more on the rector and vestry to plan and manage its affairs. Each member of the country church, on the other hand, can be made to feel that he has a part, not only in the work itself but also in the actual planning of the work.

There are three basic questions that should be made the foundation of the parish program. The primary one is, "Why the Church, and why are we organized as a parish in the community; what is the purpose of the parish?" The second question will be just as searching, "What are we doing to fulfill this purpose?" The third question contains the charter for the program, "What should we be doing to fulfill this purpose?"

HIS PREACHING

If only one sentence about preaching in rural churches were allowed, it would be that "the best is never too good." The rural congregation is prevented from being "an eager, expectant throng hanging on every word," but it is appreciative of a good sermon. Rural church preaching should have for its ideal the preaching of our Lord. His most effective "sermons" were preached to small groups, and the essentials of the Gospel of the Kingdom were given to country folk in rural terms. He also reached people with a message for their specific needs and problems. From Him they received a way of life. These times are not unlike the times of our Lord's earthly ministry. Men and women are living in the midst of a complex life, and their own lives are confused. They lack spiritual direction.

The spiritual problems of rural people are just as great and as pressing as those of city folk. They may differ in kind and in number, but the same modern life is presenting them with so many spiritual and moral alternatives that they, too, find it difficult to make up their minds. Propaganda is rife, and it adds to the confusion. It is especially difficult for the layman to know if he is really getting the facts in any given situation. His loyalties are divided, and the constant play of

so many opposing forces has a strong tendency towards creating split personalities.

Family life in the country is in danger of disintegration. The old moorings that made the rural home a tower of strength are giving way under the encroachments of new divisive social customs. The interests and activities of the children and the young people are found more and more outside the home. The Church's obligation to preserve the integrity of family life is just as pressing in rural areas as it is in the cities.

The preaching of the religion of Jesus Christ cannot be unrelated to these problems. Interesting sermons and sermons of literary and scholarly merit will not of themselves serve this need. They may have their place, but they are highly questionable if they do not give particular help on the moral and spiritual problems that are bothering the people of a rural congregation. The sermon must reach people. The standard to which the preacher will try to measure up in each sermon is, "What can I say that will make my people feel that I understand their spiritual needs, so that they will be moved to come to me for counsel and direction?" The sermon should become a power to accomplish this end. It is not serving its purpose unless it does.

This means, then, that the preacher must know the problems of his people. To meet their problems his constant effort will be to present the Religion of the Incarnation so practically and so clearly that it will constitute the point and the purpose of their lives. His preaching will not only be directed towards making them understand life better, and seeing their place in it, but it will also enable them to see their own possibilities. Through the sermon, the confused standards that are born out of the contending and conflicting forces in mod-

ern life must be fused into one standard—the standard of the Incarnate Lord.

The type of sermon that is best adapted generally to the rural church is the teaching sermon. Its chief recommendations are that it lends itself especially well to the small congregation, and that it offers the opportunity for instruction. The formal, or the topical type of sermon, is often incongruous in the little church. It is difficult to make it fit into an intimate atmosphere. As the sermon is the pastor's regular opportunity for teaching, he should never be satisfied with a sermon unless he has taught his people something that they had not learned before. He must keep in mind that he is building up and developing in them the rationale of their Christian lives, and that he cannot accomplish this solely by inspiring them. They must be carried along Sunday after Sunday through a co-ordinated teaching which has been planned to widen their horizons and enrich their lives. It is well for him to regard his congregation as a class to be instructed rather than a congregation to be preached to.

In recommending the teaching type of sermon, we recognize that the task of the preacher is always twofold. Coupled with instruction, he also has the task of conversion. Conversion has long been regarded as containing emotional elements, while instruction has not. Modern psychologists, however, are coming more and more to the conviction that teaching, considered even in its purely intellectual processes, has strong emotional forces working in it. The salutary emotional elements which are desired for the ends of conversion can be utilized in the teaching type of sermon. It is also conceivable that the emotional elements in instruction can be made more effective than those which exist in the purely conversional type of sermon.

The work of preaching, then, is a great privilege which God

gives to His ministers. Through its ministry, people can be led up on to a high mountain. They can be given a vision of the world and an interpretation of their place in it.

HIS PASTORAL WORK

It can be said without having to qualify the statement that the most important person in a rural community is a real pastor of souls. But in order to occupy such a place he must study to show himself "approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, handling aright the word of truth." Rural pastoral work can be made to touch the lives of people at so many points that it is difficult to explore all its splendid possibilities. No other field of the pastoral ministry holds greater rewards of deep satisfaction and joy of serving than does the rural pastorate. The rural minister has the opportunity of being in the lives of people not solely in his official capacity as the rector of a parish but that of being an understanding and helpful friend.

The rural pastor must be essentially a friendly person. Because of his position in the community, and the spiritual relationship he bears to his people, he must of necessity have a certain detachment of life—a detachment in which he removes himself from the trivialities and partisanships of the small town in order that he may be able to minister to all sorts and conditions of men. For a pastor to be the "hail-fellow-wellmet" and the "jolly-good-fellow" type of man never argues that he is able to serve people in the deeper needs of their lives. While these attitudes may not connote the familiarity that breeds contempt, there is danger of its being a familiarity that obscures his real calling. It is well to say that the element of friendliness, so necessary in the rural pastor, does not have to be secured at dubious risk. His being first of all a priest

of God does not imply that he is an aloof and unapproachable person. Rural people are unusually quick to take a man at his own valuation of himself, and they have no prejudice whatsoever against allowing him to be a real friend because he is first of all a priest. On the contrary, they place great value and reliance upon a friendship that has the depth and the strength of an inner reality.

He must be a man of such bearing that it will be easy for people to bring their problems to him. They must be confident that he is a man of integrity and discretion, and that their trust in him will never be violated. This means for the rural pastor that in the intimacies of life in the small community, people can discuss their problems with him in the certainty that they will not become the property of the com-

munity.

Parish visiting should never become a perfunctory and routine performance of duty. Rural people do not live under the pressure of modern industrial life, and they are consequently more leisurely in life and manner. They like to visit, and no friend is ever more welcome than their pastor. They recognize that he is not a casual caller who has dropped in to pass the time of day and to inquire after the health of the family. His visit has a special significance because he touches the spiritual relationships of their lives. Not very many people, rural or urban, are articulate concerning their spiritual lives when the pastor calls, but the value of the call is never to be judged by how much spiritual counsel is asked for. It comes rather from the opportunity to talk about the things of the Spirit. His instructions about the Church and the Christian way of life in the sermon and in class work can be greatly extended in the pastoral call. He should set a standard of accomplishment for himself which will make him dissatisfied with his calls until he is able to come away from homes with

the feeling that he has contributed to the spiritual lives of those he has visited. Where it is possible, certain evenings of the week should be reserved for visiting. This is suggested for the obvious purpose of enabling the pastor to visit with the entire family. It is in these visits that he will come to know the father, mother, and children in their true relationship to him and his parish—that of the family. Calls made at places of business and on the farms are useful, but they should never be made to take the place of visiting with the men in their homes.

The farm homes with families more or less isolated from the main stream of community life offer a splendid field of pastoral service. Studies made of the "trade areas" of towns less than ten thousand in population show that they are the most poorly evangelized sections of the United States. They are below either the city, town, or village in percentage of population in the Churches. Many of our farm families, therefore, have no relationship with the community excepting that of trade. They are always most generous in their welcome and their appreciation of a minister of Christ who comes to them in their isolation and brings a contact with the outside world. The pastor can often be a great help in establishing a liaison between farm people and the social life of the community. He has in his parish a social group, ready at hand, to which he can relate them.

The rural pastor is often advised to become a specialist or expert in every type of secular business which concerns the lives of his people. While he should strive to know something about the problems that enter into the business of his people, it is certainly not expected that he should qualify as an expert on any of them. He should be, first of all, a man whose sympathies are so broad that he will be able to understand and perhaps give specific help to people, but they, least of all,

expect him to know more about their business than they know themselves. He does not lose caste with them because he is not an expert in judging cattle, or that he is not a trained agronomist. They recognize that he has a craft of his own in which they are not proficient. It is necessary, however, that the rural pastor have a specific knowledge of the economic factors that are affecting the lives of his people. He should be interested in acquiring a knowledge of the facilities that can be utilized to make his people better farmers or better merchants, and the co-operation that is needed to bring about better urban and rural trade relations. He often stands in a position of advantage in the community and its farm area. If he has such a position he should also have the technical equipment to enable him to be of practical and definite service to his people in their business relationships.

The phenomenal development of the mental and social sciences is giving to the clergy a new pastoral technique. The expression, "the cure of souls," has taken on a new significance. The ministry of the Church is using increasingly these contributions of modern science to help effect the integration and expansion of personality in the pastoral relationship. The growth of an extensive and valuable bibliography on pastoral psychology is not only making it possible for the clergy to utilize sound principles of psychology in their pastoral work, but also to extend its scope. The need for this specialized

approach in rural areas is readily apparent.

The great interest aroused by mental hygiene propaganda has been confined largely to the city, but it is very important that rural people also receive the benefits of attention to the problems of mental health. Cases of social and emotional maladjustment in rural areas usually go by default. They generally appear in isolation, and little attention is paid to them; yet if all such cases could be put together, their impres-

sive magnitude would leave little doubt that rural areas have great need for mental hygiene. Psychiatric case workers have become a necessity to city welfare agencies, but they are practically unknown in rural areas. There is scarcely a greater service that a rural pastor can render the people of his community than technically equipping himself to help his people in their problems of mental health.

While there are great dangers in an untrained person trying to treat a delicate psychotic case, yet the rural pastor, if he makes any study of psychiatric problems at all, will recognize how far this type of pastoral work can extend. It will be possible for him to judge what problems he can undertake safely himself and what problems should be referred to the trained psychiatrist and physician. The problems with which the rural pastor should be chiefly concerned are those of child training, the family, and marriage, and he must be sufficiently familiar with their psychological factors to enable him to meet them with the same degree of intelligence that characterizes his other work.

The problem of young people in rural areas should receive special consideration from the rural pastor. They constitute an especially needy group, and because of the particular effect of the economic crisis upon them, their problems are in some ways greater than those of any other group. As an outcome of economic necessity, more young people are now living on the farms and in the rural town than ever before. Industry and commercial establishments had been drawing youths by the thousand into the cities. This drift came to a standstill in the early months of the economic crisis and a reverse movement set in. In addition to those who went back to their family homes in rural areas, there was the great number who could not go to the city. In view of this condition, it can be said that the present generation of rural youth is almost

stranded. All doors of opportunity seem tragically closed to them, and they need very keenly the help of a pastor who has an understanding of their problem and an intelligence to help them with it. Guiding rural youth in education and vocation is a practical solution of many of its difficulties. As in the case of the training for the new psychological pastoral technique, there is an excellent bibliography on educational and vocational counseling which makes it possible for the rural pastor to equip himself technically for a higher type of work

with young people.

Juvenile delinquency problems offer a much-needed service for the rural pastor. How often do we see boys and girls sent ultimately to reformatories and houses of correction because there was no one to befriend them and counsel with them after their first offense. It is never difficult for the delinquent youth in rural areas to feel that the hand of the community is against him largely because, after his first offense, it actually is against him. To keep these antisocial psychoses from taking hold of him, he needs to have someone believe in him; to give him another chance. The work of the Big Brother and Big Sister movements in our cities has filled a great need. They have rescued literally thousands of young people from lives of crime. These movements, or at least the spirit of them, should be carried to rural boys and girls. The rural pastor should not only be friend and big brother to the delinquents themselves, but he should also try to create a sentiment for probation and parole in the community. Very few rural communities have judges who are trained to handle cases of juvenile delinquency. Consequently, the juvenile is generally given a legal judgment based on his crime, rather than on any understanding of his lack of social or mental adjustment.

The county jail is wholly terra incognita to the rural community. It generally stands in the community, but is cer-

tainly never of the community. Officers and lawyers and a quarterly visit of the grand jurors are usually the only people from the outside that prisoners ever see. Visiting the jail, therefore, offers an opportunity for service. A friendly pastor who comes to the jail regularly gains the confidence of men who are confined for long sentences. He can oftentimes establish a relationship between himself and an inmate which will be a great factor in integrating the offender into normal society again. Men and women grow bitter and antisocial when they are shut up in prison walls, but their bitterness can be mitigated by new social outlooks and perspectives. A man of God is usually the only person in the community who can effect this reintegration of offenders into society.

HIS PERSONAL LIFE

The dangers of every kind of stagnation are greater in the rural ministry than in any other field of the Church's ministry. These dangers arise from the fact that the little town and the small congregation do not make the constant and articulate demands upon energies and talents that are made upon the pastor of a city parish. Unless he is near a city, which affords him opportunities for fellowship and counsel with his brethren of the ministry, he must also live a life of professional isolation. If he does not recognize that he must build up the inner resources of mind and spirit to withstand these inimical forces that play upon his life, he will not grow. Yet he must grow if he is to give full proof of his ministry. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." For the rural pastor this can be transliterated to mean that he must work and study and pray in order that his ministry may show increasingly an identity with that of his Lord's ministry—that "those whom thou hast given me ... may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee." The dissatisfactions, disillusionments, and heartaches that are found among men in the rural ministry have as their basis a spiritual and an intellectual stagnation. It is a problem of the interior life that is hard for the men themselves to recognize. They work, and perhaps work according to approved plans, but their ministry is more largely occupied in "doing" than in "being." The round of ceaseless activity—of being busy in good works—will ultimately fail to hold men to a wholesome enthusiasm for their calling. There must be a depth to the inner life which can place the meaning of activity in its proper perspective.

Many young men who go direct from the seminary into the rural field, at first feel an exhilaration at being freed from the routine of academic life. The work that is before themwhich is often the arduous task of taking care of three or four mission stations—is approached with keen zest. The days, full of activity, are in sharp contrast to the quietness of student days. They have the maturity of mind to value the orderliness in devotional life and intellectual activity that the seminary stood for, but for the time being these must be regarded as needing less attention than the immediate task of getting work well started in the mission stations. As young priests become more and more engrossed in activity, the sense of need for a vigorous devotional and intellectual life is dulled, and it becomes increasingly difficult for them to get back into habits of prayer and study. And yet the rural priest must be continually bringing to mind that these elements in his ministry are the things on which he is basing his life. His work must have these foundations if his ministry is to be pervaded by one of those strong, vigorous, and invading spiritual personalities that characterize men of God.

The rural minister lacks opportunity for outside spiritual and intellectual stimulation; he must find it for himself. For

this reason it is suggested that he needs especially to live under a rule of prayer and study. It should be a simple rule, but one to which he should hold himself in strictest accountability. Whatever else may constitute his day's work, prayer and study should have their proper and carefully guarded place. It is possible for many priests to make and keep their own rule, but much guidance and stimulation can be secured by having one that holds a priest accountable to someone else. There are several organizations and movements in the Church which are of great help to the clergy in both the devotional and the intellectual aspects of their lives. The field of advanced study is especially well taken care of by the graduate schools of many of our universities. They offer a wide choice of courses in philosophy and the social sciences. There is a need, however, for extension study in theology. One of our seminaries has already recognized this need by making provision for extension courses in its curriculum.

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CHAPTER II

A PARISH PROGRAM

The charge of laziness is frequently made against the rural clergy. They are not lazy, but there is a fault which gives color to this charge: they are sometimes aimless. The ceaseless round of parochial duties of city clergy in no manner describes the work of rural clergy. The fact that their work is not so clearly defined does not argue that they have less work, or that it is of lesser importance. It simply means that greater genius is required to find what is their work. The two fields differ so vitally that it is necessary for them to be approached on different bases. The survey, with all the facts and information it reveals, combats the dangers of aimlessness by giving to priest and people a definite program.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE SURVEY

The word "survey" will occur frequently in this book. The purpose here is only to emphasize that all the concerns of the Church's life are to be studied, through the means of the survey, with a view to obtaining all the facts in any given situation. If plans, programs, and policies are to be placed on a sound basis, they will have been arrived at through a survey. The physician bases his treatment of a patient on diagnosis; the lawyer handles his client's case on the basis of data and evidence. Why should not the Church, therefore, utilize the practical method of surveys in an endeavor to adjust the work of the Church to the needs of its people? A more

extended treatment of surveys is given in Chapter VII.*

"The needs of the parish must be the law of the Church," and the fundamental purpose of the survey is to discover these needs. The twofold value of the survey is clearly stated by Dr. C. J. Galpin:†

"The survey discloses a constantly new parish. It is a rare rural pastor who can, by unaided casual means and methods of parish acquaintance, escape the point of diminishing interest in his parish and congregation. A growing staleness, after the first flush of newness wears off the parish, begins to creep over the casual rural pastor. . . . He is open to doubts about the efficiency of his own work, to suspicions about a cleavage in the parish; he is open, then, to allurements vaguely drifting to him from other parishes, illusions about a permanent freshness in a new field of labor, ambitions as to increased salary and opportunity. The inevitable monotony of a static view of the parish weakens the grip of the rural pastor. To meet this situation, the method of constantly studying a parish affords an undoubted antidote. Every year the parish becomes a new parish to the observing, measuring, probing, recording rural pastor.

"The survey creates a constantly new pastor. If the parish is liable to become an old story to the casual rural pastor, much more, perhaps, is it true that the casual pastor is liable to become an old story to his rural parish. . . . Unless he is a close student of his own parish, the time soon comes when the parish knows beforehand and can predict his attitudes and utterances. . . . The rural pastor who is carefully studying his parish year by year in a systematic way becomes a new man as he discovers a new parish. The fresh point of view, the vital use of essential facts, the dynamic themes, continue to weld pastor and people together."

We are accustomed to see maps of parishes on the walls of the office or study of city pastors, but they are not met with

+ Rural Life, pp. 354-355.

^{*}For a detailed method of conducting surveys, the reader is referred to Surveying Your Community by Edmund deS. Brunner. It is published by the Institute of Social and Religious Research, and it was written to meet the need of rural churches for a handbook of rural church survey methods.

frequently enough in the studies of rural pastors. If the only service they rendered was that of showing the rural pastor where his parishioners lived, they would not be needed, because he has no difficulty in learning the location of every home in his parish. The chief value of the map is psychological. It keeps his parish before him in graphic form. It is a picture which spreads out his parish before him and makes it possible for him better to visualize his field. His survey will give him the data for his map. If he will draw a line between the outermost homes of the trade area on the map he will have the boundaries of his parish. It will include not only all the homes but also the institutions the people use in common: all the churches, schools, lodges, stores, banks, and places of amusement. These factors show him the measure of the religious and social integration of his people. He will mark on the map his routes of parish visiting, and as he goes about on his visits he will be better prepared to meet the particular needs of the people upon whom he may be calling. To quote Dr. Galpin again:

"Whatever the type of parish—whether open country, hamlet, village or small city—an accurate map, large, made to scale, containing every farm home spotted, every highway, should be in the pastor's study. This map pictures the pastor's workshop. His study room is only an office. His library, his church building, his parsonage, his social building, are his appliances. But his field, his parish, where the human plants are growing, is his farm. Drawing with the instruments of a draftsman, skillfully and attractively, will become an accomplishment. The pastor once having got the idea of visualizing his parish on paper, will find himself studying the significant relationships of his parishioners to their representation on his parish map. No human relationships are outside his idealism. The real and the actual, the ideal and religious, are closely co-ordinated in his thought." *

^{*} Ibid., pp. 352-353.

ORGANIZATIONS

Every rural pastor has at some time wished that he could abolish all organizations. From time to time, we have had a Moses to rise up and declare himself willing to lead the Church out of its grubby Egypt of organizations. But these things can never come to pass. The difficulty lies in an inadequate view of organizations. We are not mature in our thinking about them when we assign them only to such categories as "giving people something to do," or "making opportunity for social expression." It is well to face the fact that it is not organizations themselves that are at fault, but rather our lack of ability to make the best use of them. Many things in modern parish work can be accomplished only through organized effort. An organization, after all, is a simple thing. A few searching questions asked about it will make it possible to determine whether it is serving a purpose. And let it be set down, first of all, that a parish has no need for an organization unless it does serve a real purpose. Again, its accomplishments may fall so far short of its original idea that its continuance becomes highly questionable. The fact remains, however, that the ideal should not be allowed to disappear with the organization. It is a splendid tonic for each organization to have regular times for self-examination. Shortcomings of organizations cannot be revealed through reading reports at the annual meeting of the organization, or the annual meeting of the parish. The self-examination must not be made solely in terms of business and activity, but rather in the measure of their ideals and practices in terms of religion. In a word, it is a regular restatement of purpose that is needed to keep the performance of the organizations up to the mark. A parish organization must never be allowed to

flounder. Its life is in peril when its members begin to say, "We ought to do something, but what can we do?" Its importance, as a part of the vital life of the parish, should always

be clear, and its purpose and program definite.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the business of setting the parish to work on a constructive program must occupy a place of first consideration in the pastor's work. The measure and the quality of his leadership are manifested in his ability to get his people to recognize the need of a program and to set to work on building it themselves. It must never be a thing that is handed down as his handiwork. He must never think of it as his program until it is also the program of everyone else in his parish.

WORK FOR AGE AND SEX GROUPS

A country parish, in establishing a program for the whole parish, will take full account of the age and sex groups of which it is comprised. The fundamentals of church organization contemplate that each group in the parish maintain a fourfold activity. These are worship, study, service, and fellowship. These are basic in the life of the parish, and in order to have all organizations or groups at work in a unified program, each of these elements should have its emphasis in each group.

The parish is primarily an organization for worship, otherwise it has no reason for existing as a church. Its congregational worship on Sunday is its most important and fundamental activity. The fountainhead of all its corporate life is here, and from it every group activity must be made to have its reason for being. Provision should be made, however, for an expression of worship within each group. To accomplish this end it is not enough to have a meeting opened with

prayer. The group should have services of its own, conducted by its own members. To avoid a mere perfunctory compliance with the supposed amenities of church organization, the group should have, as a part of it, a worship of its own which has meaning and purpose.

The *study* element in the program of a parish is treated more extensively in Chapter V, and although the plan of religious education there set forth may seem comprehensive enough, no opportunity to introduce study should be lost.

The Church has set an excellent norm for *service* by encouraging organizations to work in the "Five Fields of Service." These fields should be made the graphic expressions of the Christian's relationship to his *parish*, his *community*, his *diocese*, his *nation*, and his *world*. The motives of the organization which are expressed in terms of worship, study, service, and fellowship must be related also to each of the five fields.

The need for organization according to age and sex groups may be said to have its basis in the *fellowship* motive. This principle is, of course, obvious, but oftentimes we do not invest fellowship with its Christian significance in our parish organizations. Our groups should have a higher expression of fellowship than that which commonly obtains in secular group organization. The distinctive emphasis in parish groups needs to be placed on the Christian family idea, rather than on the principle of congeniality. The little parish should be thought of as a family whose members have interests, considerations, and ideals in common. The Christian motive of brotherhood should succeed in forming a fellowship which transcends a relationship built only upon motives of special interests and congeniality.

Every group in the parish should have a chart on which it keeps its activities graphically set forth. The chart can be made of heavy cardboard. Five concentric circles, intersected with a perpendicular and a horizontal line, are drawn to represent the motive and the service activities of the group. The four quadrants made by the lines will represent the worship, study, service, and fellowship motives of the group, and the five circles will represent the five fields of activity as they are found in the parish, the community, the diocese, the nation, and the world. When the year's program of the group is made, it should be lettered on the chart, and as each item is accomplished it can be designated on the chart by pasting some appropriate paper symbol which will betoken a completed effort. The two aspects of the chart should also be related to each other by showing how the motives of the organization are expressed in its service activities.

Children

There is little need for the activities of the younger children to go beyond an organized Church school class. Most of our Church school literature calls for some work or study that can be carried on by the class outside of Church school sessions. Class meetings for this purpose should be provided. The children should have regular opportunities for a social life in their own age grouping. Two or three classes, composed of children near the same age, can oftentimes be combined for their social activities. The story hour can be used extensively in all children's groups for both entertainment and instruction. The following items are suggested for the activities of children's groups:

Church school choir. Children's mission. Christmas and Easter pageants. Story hour and handcraft work. Children's parties.

Young People

Where it is possible, the young people of a parish should be affiliated with the diocesan young people's organization. Through diocesan meetings and co-operative programs, they can be made conscious of this larger fellowship in the Church's life.

A close relation between the group, the services of the Church, and the Church school should be maintained. The young people with a little help can work out these relationships themselves if they have been given a clearly stated motive. They must be allowed to develop in initiative and leadership, but this cannot be possible in its fullest scope if they are made self-conscious by a pastor or a counselor who dominates all their meetings. It is far better for them to blunder and to struggle against apparent ineffectiveness than for them to feel that the group activity is not really their own. It must be their own if it is to hold their interest.

Young people are generally organized in a group for both sexes. This is a generally accepted norm and should be adhered to, but it should also allow boys and girls to carry on some work in separate groups. Adolescent self-consciousness often inhibits the best quality of work being done when boys and girls are in constant association with each other. Constant vigilance is required if their activities are not to become entirely social in their nature. The rural church has a special responsibility in the matter of making it possible for young people to have a "good time." This is made necessary because of a poverty of opportunity for a healthful social life that usually obtains in rural areas. The social aspect of young people's organizations is always sufficient warrant for having them. The social or fellowship side of their activities, how-

ever, can have more meaningful expression if it has been related to the motives of worship, study, and service.

The rural church has lagged far behind the city church in providing for organized young people's work. There is scarcely a city parish which does not have some activity for its youths, but it is rare that we find a vigorous group in a rural parish. There are, of course, special difficulties in the rural field that are not met with in the cities. The first and most prominent one is that of a supposed lack of young people. In this situation, like many others in the rural field, we are prone to take the attitude that because the group is necessarily small it is not possible to carry on organized work. This should never be a deterrent. The smallness of the group might itself argue for the need of such a group. The social isolation and the hunger for social activity may arise from the very fact that the group is small. Another difficulty that is frequently met is the lack of counselor leadership. This also should not be a barrier. While a little country church rarely has experienced leaders for young people's groups, it certainly has potential leaders in men and women who could be made to have an interest if they were trained for leadership. Diocesan summer conferences have done much towards perfecting this type of training by carrying young people's leadership courses in their curricula.

The emphasis which the Church in recent years has been giving to its work for young people's groups has been exceptional. It has met with a Church-wide response. With few exceptions the dioceses have their officers and staff for promoting the work within their own borders. The Department of Religious Education of the National Council has a division for young people's work, and the Secretary's counsel and suggestions are available to individual groups. The Church has

several national organizations for boys and girls which promote organization for separate groups.

Adults

The religion of the family is now of greatest importance to the rural Church. Notwithstanding the fact that the "family altar" is making its best stand in rural homes, it is a declining force in the religion of rural people. If religion in the home is to be conserved and encouraged, it must begin with the adults in the congregation. Any religious activity for them must have in mind the reinstatement of the practice of religion and of raising its standards. Behind every religious activity designed for adults must be the underlying motive of creating a higher quality Christian home life.

In order to produce this, the adults of the congregation must be vitally interested in the Church and the things for which the Church stands. To accomplish this end, activities of special interest for men and women should find a place in the program of the parish. In a large measure their needs may be met by an adult class, similar to the one described in Chapter IV. But whatever plan is used, the particular effort should be made to give a wider range of social, religious, and intellectual contacts. The tone of the rural home is too often commonplace and mediocre. The narrow clannish spirit, giving rise to jealousy and rivalry, inevitably produces unwholesome community relations. A need for more idealism will also be taken into account. Materialism is too much with rural people. The industries of rural life approach so very nearly to being modes of living that the family is easily consumed by its occupation. These are all influences which make for cultural barrenness. If the purpose of the Church is to be

fully realized, it must broaden and deepen the spiritual lives

of men and women. In no social grouping is this more particularly needed than in the rural community. New inspirations for creating a better Christian home life and a more socially effective community life can be drawn from the definite spiritual activities of men and women in their parishes. But they must be spiritual, and they must have a definite goal.

We have not gone far enough in emancipating our women in rural church work. For the most part, we are still holding them to the little drudgeries and uninteresting ecclesiastical chores that for many years have been their lot. We have enmeshed them so firmly in the rounds of bazaars, teas, dinners, and other little money-making schemes that we have left little opportunity for them to make a larger contribution of their spirit and intelligence to the life of the Church. Women are supposed to have more leisure than men, and if this is true we still do not have a warrant for squandering their leisure on matters that are beneath their spiritual talents and their abilities.

The traditional ideas of women's work which have continued so long with us and are embodied in the conventional "Woman's Guild" should be discarded. To keep them serves only to perpetuate what should be an outmoded expression of women's work. It is not fair to women, nor is it good economy for the Kingdom of God, to set for them the task of hemming tea towels when they might be engaged in working for a higher type of Christian social order. Instead of imposing time-worn and threadbare activities, the problem of their work should be approached from the point of view of their talents and their capabilities. The important thing is to begin where they are and lead them into what they may become, rather than simply to keep them busy. They must have an interest, and they must also be given a share in the great forces and movements which are trying to create Christian

standards and Christian motives for the world. The struggles for world peace, for better international relations, for a Christian social order are their problems. They should also be made aware of the dangers of the philosophies of secularism and materialism, and possess through an understanding of their religion a sufficient philosophical basis for their Christian life.

The rural pastor has in the Woman's Auxiliary a national organization which can meet his needs of a program for the women of his parish. Every baptized woman in the Church is potentially a member of the Woman's Auxiliary, but it remains for the pastor and the women of the congregation to adopt a program which will make the women of his parish actual members.

The Woman's Auxiliary has developed and expanded its program in the last few years. In the early days of the organization it confined its interests to mission study and missionary activity. But in the development of its program through years of experience it has become elastic and can therefore be adjusted and adapted to meet the particular requirements of any group. It is at once a broad and a cohesive program. It neglects no concern of the Christian woman in either her personal religious life or her interests as a Christian with a world view. Before setting up a program for women, study should be given to the purposes and plans of the Woman's Auxiliary. The national headquarters of the organization offers its many resources towards making women's work

The men of rural congregations have not had the special attention given to their group that is needed. Once they have been given a sufficient motive and a clear-cut and challenging program, they become a power that can remake the life of the country parish. The motive is definitely a spiritual one. The program must grow out of a new conception of the Church

effective in rural parishes.

and her religion. No man's religion is so inarticulate as that of the rural man. Emotional expression in religion in rural areas has oftentimes repelled him. Unconsciously he has raised up defenses that make him difficult to approach on the basis of religion, and yet he is religious. He lacks facility of expression. He sometimes thinks that its public expression must be made in the terms of over-pious and fervid evangelism. These are alien to his emotional nature. His deepest need is for religion which can be understood as the normal, natural, and happy expression of daily life. As a move towards this new view, he must be provided with opportunities for worship and study with other men. These will lead him to see his church and his community in new relationships. By this approach to him, his areas of interest will widen, and his motive for service will become clearer. Rural pastors sometimes get deeply discouraged over trying to keep their men organized in group activity. Men, to be sure, do not "organize" very well, but before the effort to keep them organized is given up, it is legitimate to ask if the chief difficulty does not come from placing our programs for them on too low a plane. Plans and programs fail more often because they are not important enough than because they are too fine and idealistic. Chapters of the Brotherhood of St. Andrew are increasing in rural parishes, and the splendid ideals and programs of the organization are adequate to the needs of men's work in rural parishes.

MISSIONARY EDUCATION

Our rural parishes and missions suffer under the debilitating influences of dependency. It is almost the exception to find one whose members do not ring all the changes on their weaknesses and insufficiency. Their missionary vision is

sometimes cramped, and their missionary giving parsimonious. They have been allowed to think too often that they are objects of missionary giving, and that missionary support should come to them rather than go out from them. There is nothing that contributes so much to parochial hypochondria as this attitude. And, conversely, there is nothing that is so specific and effective in its cure as a vigorous missionary interest which dominates the life of the parish. Like all other of the more important projects of the program of the parish, interest in missions is based on education.

Every pastor grants that missionary interest is a necessary part of being a Christian, but he cannot take for granted that the Christians in his parish have an active conviction about the matter. Persuading people to accept the basic assumption of missions in Christian belief is not very difficult, but the basic assumption alone will not carry a parish's missionary interest very far or very deep. It must be founded upon a program of missionary education, carefully planned and faithfully carried through. If they are to possess the regenerating forces which only missionary-mindedness can give to them, our rural parishes need two compelling motives. The first is that they must be given a world vision of the work of the Church. The second is that by reason of their membership in the Church they are obligated to the Church's world-wide mission. Many arguments can be put forth as to why a parish may center all its interest on itself, but none of them is a sufficient answer to the definite missionary implication of the "great commission." It often happens that a rural parish receives far more support from its diocese or district than it is asked to give to missions, but that fact does not in any measure lessen the obligation of the parish to maintain a steady and live interest in missionary work, and to give towards its support. It is only as the rural parish finds a real expression for

its Christian life in the world-wide mission of Christianity that it will be able to find its true place in its own parish bounds.

The path of the rural pastor who tries to lead his people into a deeper appreciation of missions is frequently a very rough one. He has to combat the insularity and ultra-parochialism which have generally beset rural work. Oftentimes it is necessary for him to stand alone, and occasionally he will feel called upon to take a bold and challenging stand, but a display of real and reasonable conviction on his part will ultimately win an ever-increasing following for the missionary cause.

Missionary education has an inherent right to a preferred place in the program, and it should be planned to reach every member of the parish. The National Council yearly mission study course for adults often reaches some of the women. The Lenten Offering material for Church schools and courses on Missions provide mission study for the children. Beyond these two groups, however, are all the men, the women unattached to the Woman's Auxiliary, and the young people. These may be reached by frequent missionary sermons, missionary illustrations in other sermons, missionary facts and achievements cited at the time of the giving of announcements, judicious distribution of free missionary leaflets from the National Council, a missionary book-shelf, the promotion of the sale and reading of The Spirit of Missions, missionary plays and pageants.

Excellent missionary programs for young people's meetings may be arranged, and mission study course material especially prepared for young people is available. In some parishes the vestry devotes part of its regular meetings to the study of the world-wide responsibility and opportunity of the Church, either under the leadership of the rector, or someone else.

The preparation of the Every Member Canvasses also offers an excellent opportunity for missionary education.

A parish missionary committee, with representation from various parish organizations, can be of much help to the rector in arranging the parish program of missionary education. Wherever possible, provision should be made for a "School of Missions" for the entire parish. The Church has come more and more to use Lent as a season for special study, and because it is a period of intensive devotion and study it offers an added time for missionary education. The men, women, and young people can be organized into three separate departments of the "School," and each may meet at its own most convenient time. The course may include an intensive study of some particular mission field, or each session may take up a different field. But as a preparation for the study of a field, there should be a study of the meaning of missions why the Church is engaged in missionary work, and what is the philosophy behind it.

The rural pastor can always find an abundance of help for the missionary education program of his parish. The Spirit of Missions, the Church's international missionary magazine, should be in every home in his parish. His entire mission study program can be given immeasurably greater vitality by encouraging his people to read the current news and stories it carries. The magazine carries a graphic account of the month-by-month progress of the Church's world-wide mis-

sionary enterprise.

PUBLICITY

The inherent conservatism of the Episcopal Church has been a strong influence against the use of publicity. In the past, there has been a vast amount of bad taste exhibited in church publicity, and this, together with the high pressure salesmanship that characterizes commercial publicity, has made the Church slow to recognize the values of publicity.

But publicity has a place in the Church, and it should be a very important one. In the National Council's manual * on publicity, it is stated that "Church publicity is the process of making information public, to the end that men's opinions and conduct may be influenced towards the purposes for which the Church exists. . . . It is a means of education and of evangelization. It fails in its purpose if either means is sought to the exclusion of the other.

"Whether a particular publicity effort takes the form of a periodical, a handbill, a bulletin, a letter, an advertisement, or a sermon, it is not fulfilling its full mission unless it carries its informative (educational) message and, in addition, a portion of the 'Good News' (evangelization) that the Church has to tell to the world. This is basic, fundamental. Unless it is the central principle of every publicity effort, it is not a proper publicity effort for the Church to undertake. The principle disposes for all time of the objection that some church publicity is undignified, cheapening, out of harmony with the whole genius of the Church. There is such unworthy publicity. Fortunately, there is but little of it in the Episcopal Church.

"... The success of the Church in winning the unchurched world depends largely on the acceptance by the Church of publicity as the means of establishing contact. It is the only means that is unlimited in scope, the only means that, properly used, can reach *everyone*. Service, money, members; these are the things that publicity can bring to the Church. They are

^{*} Publicity for the Church, by John W. Irwin. National Council, New York, 1929.

the three vital needs, the things that the Church is intended to produce. Service in the Master's work, money for doing His work everywhere, men brought from darkness to light."

Not many rural parishes have the means or the facilities for extensive publicity, but we are persuaded that they have

much more of both than is generally used.

The weekly newspaper of the community is notably generous in giving space for church notices and church news items, and the rural pastor who does not realize the value of keeping his parish before the people of the community through the columns of the local newspaper is neglecting an excellent adjunct to his work.

The editor of the newspaper of the community should be an important person in the life and work of the rural parish. The pastor should not only be acquainted with him but he should also try to cultivate his friendship. Potentially, the editor is a community leader. The help he can give the Church should be fully reciprocated by the co-operation the pastor can give the newspaper. As a return for the publicity which the editor gives to the parish, the pastor will be on the alert for items of community news and articles of special interest which he can contribute towards the editor's enterprise.

The parish paper has proved itself a potent force. Very few city parishes feel that they can carry on parish-wide activities without the aid of the parish paper. The rural parish is just as great in its basic need for some publicity. The need becomes acute when the priest has several mission stations in his charge. The greatest cohering factor in a work scattered over a large territory is a parish paper. It is not necessary that it be a pretentious and an elaborate production of the editor's skill, or the printer's art. In many parishes a mimeographed letter is all that can be provided. But before the parish is kept from having an adequate medium of publicity

the pastor should not be contented until all possibilities are

carefully explored.

The parish paper, regardless of its size and form, is entitled to a purpose, and that purpose should characterize every issue. "Publicity for the Church," while allowing for variations in purpose because of local conditions, sets forth the real purpose of the parish paper as follows:

"To convey to all the people of the parish the current parish news and some church news of wider interest (diocesan and national), together with some material that is educational, inspirational and devotional; all tending to influence opinions and conduct towards the purposes for which the Church exists." *

FINANCE

No real facing of the ever-perplexing problem of rural church finance can be accomplished except through the Every Member Canvass. We never meet the issue by saying that the Every Member Canvass will not work in this or that parish. It has worked in every conceivable situation, and it has too many years of successful experience behind it to say that it cannot be adopted and utilized in every parish and mission in the land. When we use the words "Every Member Canvass" we should not read into them a hard and rigorous technique. All that is implied in the broadest usage of the term is that in some manner and by some means every member of the Church should be given a specific opportunity to come to some understanding of the meaning of Christian stewardship and of giving expression to it by subscribing to the financial support of the work of the Church. The methods of presenting this opportunity can be adjusted to meet any local situation. The greatest commendation of the Every Member Canvass is the

^{*} Publicity for the Church, by John W. Irwin, p. 70.

fact that it is businesslike and dignified. The parish that depends for its support wholly on voluntary gifts, plate collections, or church fairs is not abreast of the times. In its own community it is frequently held in low esteem because its methods of finance are not compatible with the dignity of its mission. Self-respect is the individual's most valuable attribute of character, and the esteem in which it is held by the individual should also be made to apply to the parish. If the parish does not respect itself enough to support its work in a dignified and businesslike manner, and if its work has not been thought of reverently and as deserving the support of its members, then it deserves the contempt of the community. The mission of the parish may need restating. Its importance to the life of its own membership may need a reëxamining. It is unworthy of the religion of our Lord to allow a parish to continue as pensioner on a reluctant and penurious charity of the people who comprise its membership. It must be made to find a place in their lives as an element of primary importance.

An adequate support of any parish, therefore, must come out of those purposive and patient educative processes that bring conviction. And the Church needs educating concerning its financial obligations as much as it needs it in any other part of its work. No reticent or timid measures will suffice. Finance has dignity in every other concern in life, and there is no reason why it should be apologized for when it is related to the Church.

The support of the parish through sales, bazaars, or dinners is to be deplored. While these money-raising schemes may have their place, they should never be used to provide for the essential budget of the parish. It may be possible for some parishes to carry on money-raising activities without cutting across secular commercial interest, and when this is possible

no odium need be attached to the Church. But on the other hand, the Church represents itself as depending upon the support of people, which comes out from their own livelihood, and it is therefore unbecoming for the Church to enter the commercial field in competition with legitimate business—business which is licensed and taxed by the local, county, and state governments. The fact that the Church makes these competitive incursions only occasionally cannot be pleaded as a mitigating circumstance.

The work of making a budget and of conducting an Every Member Canvass is very much simpler, and should be more effective in a rural parish than in a city parish. The preparation for the Canvass is simpler because it is easier to reach the relatively fewer members in a rural parish. It is also possible for every member of the parish to participate in mak-

ing the budget.

A plan for the Every Member Canvass in a little rural parish

may be carried out as follows:

Meetings for the study of the Field Department literature should be held far enough in advance of the actual Canvass, in order that every member of the parish may be informed as

to the purposes of the Canvass.

After the sessions for instruction have been concluded, every baptized member and the friends of the parish should come together in a congregational meeting to discuss and formulate a budget. In making the budget the rector should first present the program of the parish for the new year, and as items necessary to the program are presented as needing financial support, they should be written down on a blackboard. Each item should be discussed, and it must then be finally adopted as a whole. After the budget has been made, the rector may ask for pledges of loyalty and support from his people. Pledge cards may be given out and the people asked to sign them

at this meeting. Before the meeting adjourns, the result of the pledges should be reported to the congregation.

This plan has the appearance of doing away with the every member visitation, but the small congregation needs the enthusiasm and the sense of strength that come from visible unity much more than it needs an every member visitation.

Pledges should be made on a weekly or monthly basis and in every case the duplex envelope system should be used. The use of duplex offerings serves to teach people to differentiate between the pledges they make towards their own local

support and that which they set aside for others.

The Church offers through the Field Department of the National Council the resources of years of study and experience in the sphere of church finance through the Every Member Canvass. The Department also publishes annually several valuable tracts and pamphlets. These, with its consultative facilities, are always available to every parish and mission in the Church.

MINISTERING TO SEVERAL MISSION STATIONS

If the ideal of the Church for ministering to her congregations were achieved, it would mean that each congregation would have its own priest ministering at its altar each Sunday. But in our present situation of lacks in both supply and sup-

port, this ideal is manifestly not possible.

Should a rural church be closed on the Sunday that the priest is not holding services in it? Are there any other alternatives? The most glaring inconsistency in the administration of our rural work is the apparent ease with which we permit the closed church condition to exist. The Church has been teaching for many centuries that Sunday is a day of worship, and only incidentally a day of rest, and yet we deny

our people the opportunity of some form of corporate worship, because we have allowed them to think that corporate worship cannot be conducted except by a priest. Neither is it reasonable to say that people will not come to church if a lay reader is conducting the service. If our people have been taught the right attitude towards corporate worship and the necessity for worship on Sunday they will give their support to non-sacramental services conducted by a lay reader.

We have never made full use of the services of lay readers. The rural churches that need their services most use them less than the city churches. Failure to appreciate the value of lay readers arises from the fact that relatively few men are efficiently prepared in this type of ministry. Church people should be abetted in an impatience with services that are conducted in a haphazard and indifferent manner, but it is not granted that lay services necessarily must be of this type. Our whole difficulty lies in the fact that the clergy do not take the time and trouble to train lay readers. If lay readers are to be called upon to perform the sacred duty of leading people in the worship of God, they are by every right entitled to the considerations of study and training which will give to them a professional status—one which has dignity in their eyes, and commands respect from the people of the congregation.

A growing number of rural clergy are using the ministry of lay readers to assist them in caring for their mission stations. A synthesis of several excellent plans is here set forth.

An extended service is not held in connection with the Church school, but immediately after class work is completed the Church service begins. The chief value of this arrangement is that of having a nucleus for a congregation. The priest-in-charge writes a sermon each week for his mission stations. This he typewrites, and he makes a sufficient number of carbon copies in order that the lay readers in his mission

stations may have a copy of the sermon. With the sermon he sends a list of hymns and the announcements. Several rural clergy also send a newsletter and a brief instruction to be read at the time for announcements. In one mission field a portion of a book of instruction on the Church is read at each service. This takes the place of the priest's written instruction.

It is maintained that lay services can be made worshipful and interesting, and that they will engage the support of the people. But perhaps their greatest value is found in the habit of regularity of worship for our people. They can be made of great help in doing away with the frightful anomaly of closed churches on Sundays.

CHURCH BUILDING AND GROUNDS

What kind of appearance does the average church in the country town present to the worshiper or to the casual passer-by? Is it pleasing and one of welcome, or is it forbidding? An authority on American church buildings recently went over the pictures of three thousand American churches. His remark was, "We could only find forty decent buildings in the whole lot. Think of the tragic waste and injury." The Episcopal Church has the background and the tradition of English rural churches, and why she should have fallen on such evil days in rural church architecture and land-scaping is difficult to understand.

The obligation the church owes its community and state is more tangible than that which is expressed as æsthetic. Very few churches are called upon to pay taxes. The state usually takes the position that the church should be exempt from taxation because through her cultural and social emphases she is a builder of good citizenship. The best outward manifestation as to how the church appreciates this esteem

of the government is to be found in the manner in which she keeps her buildings and grounds.

Our rural church has a drastic need for a vital interest in the forces of art which enter into its physical appearance. And to meet this need every rural parish should have, under the leadership of the rector, a small group of people who are studying ways and means of promoting a higher expression of art in the Church. It is a measure which will bring to those who are intimately concerned with the project much pleasure and enthusiasm. Every member of the parish and also the people of the community will possess a new pride and a deeper satisfaction in the Church.

The rural church, even less than the city church, cannot afford to neglect the psychology of religious art. The stimulus to devotion can be had as surely in the little rural church as in the great cathedrals. It is the style, the plan, the proportions, and the furnishings and decorations that present the church as a house of worship and bring the atmosphere of devotion. If they are right, they speak to us of rest, of peace, and of prayer. But if all these factors are at war with each other, they also war against the worshiper, and he finds no inspiration for staying among them.

The church building should be expressed as a unit both inside and out.

"Advertised church furniture, and fixtures turned out by the wholesale, have proved inappropriate and commonplace, lacking in quality, charm, and individuality. To encourage art and artists is to prove the truth of the definition that art is the infinite taking of pains to gain the best.

"... We must believe that beautiful things for the service of religion in the appointments and ornaments of the church are always possible, even in the face of money poverty. To a

far greater extent than is commonly realized, they can be and ought to be made locally. Ideas and plans for local workmanship and for its supervision, together with information for intelligent purchasing, are of supreme importance.

"... The appointments of the church, such as the altar and its ornaments, should bear the character of the church. They are together one thing, one common offering to the

glory of God.

"... It is being more and more realized that there is indeed a kind of holiness in beauty; that the building of a little church is as sacred an undertaking as the building of a large one; that in so far as making a church beautiful means making it right in form, in proportion, and in color, there is involved an obligation which no church builder and no vestry can deny, persistently to seek the ideal, even as in the conduct of life itself.

"It is also of peculiar significance, in this connection, that the labor which leads to beauty is labor without a price. No more lumber is needed to build a church of fine proportion than another; a church of decent simplicity may be less costly than one that is tawdry with ornament. The greater richness of the simple, well-designed church is expressive of the added thought expended upon its design; its significance is ethical and not material; its wealth is a wealth of the spirit."*

The outward appearance of the church is not complete or satisfying if it is merely architecturally correct. The church must be set off with a pleasing landscape. The form and the beauty of the building can be entirely lost if the grounds on

^{*}Little Churches, published by the Church Art Commission of the Diocese of Colorado, Denver, 1923. The Church Art Commission of the Diocese of Colorado, which publishes the booklet quoted above, is composed of a group of church artists and architects. They offer expert counsel on every phase of rural church architecture and decoration.

which it stands have not had the same considerations of

artistic planning.

A preliminary study should be made of the landscaping project. This, again, will be the work of a small group which has been drawn together because of their special interests and talents. Their responsibility will be to make a plan. After the plan has been decided on, the members of the congregation can be called on to help carry it to completion. It must be emphasized that the landscaping is being done according to plan, and that no deviation from it can be allowed. Individual plants and shrubs may be beautiful in themselves, but they should never find a place on the grounds unless they form an integral part of the whole effect. Later additions may be permitted but they, too, should be made to conform to the original plan.

Many rural churches have such extensive grounds that it is impossible to keep them all as a garden. Where a church is so fortunate, it can utilize the space in the rear of the church as picnic and recreation grounds. Native trees can be planted in one section to provide facilities for picnics, and another section can be set apart for recreation purposes. If space allows, a flower garden or a "garden of memory" can be

planted.

No plan for beautifying the church and its grounds is complete until it has made definite and long-range provision for regular interest and care. After the plans are once under way, it is not difficult to get the interest and assistance of the people of a parish, but, as a safeguard, the members who were depended upon to study and promote the projects should be kept intact as a group or a committee, to see that a parish-wide interest is sustained.

LEADERS AND LEADERSHIP TRAINING

No discussion of the rural parish is adequate unless it takes account of lay leadership. It is an unorganized and oftentimes unseen element in its life, but upon it the success of plans and programs of the parish is almost wholly dependent. The weakest point in the work of many rural parishes is their lack of trained leaders. We seem to take for granted that many projects which are reasonably necessary to the life of a parish cannot be carried on in the rural church because no leaders are available. Organizations essential to the Church, and sometimes even the Church school, are abandoned when some particular leader has had to suspend his activities. In order that a priest may work successfully in the rural field he should possess, as fundamental equipment, an ability to develop leaders. This aspect of his ministry is particularly difficult and, of course, it is not possible to know whether he has the ability until he has tried. But he must try. The need should appear as so important to him that training certain of his people for leadership will occupy a very considerable part of his time and energy. Nothing is quite so basic in his work. He multiplies and extends his own ministry through the services of the leaders he has raised up. The permanence of his work will be measured largely by the quality of leadership he has created in his parish.

Leaders always constitute a small class in society. They are said to possess inborn capacity and developed ability. But without this class society would remain relatively fixed, and essential readjustments would not be effected. The creative type of leaders are the innovators, the inventors, the discoverers, and the creators of new ideas and new movements in society. The mass of human beings living in any particular

society are in striking contrast to its small class of leaders. They are not innovating and creating, but they are endowed with imitative minds. These two categories would seem to draw the lines very tautly, if it were not for the fact that there is no such thing as a "dead level" in human society. Dr. Gillette * gives as the prime requisites of productive leadership—"power of initiative, organizing ability, sympathy with human aims, trained intelligence, and vision or outlook." The hopeful factor for rural church leadership is that all these qualities may be and often are possessed by an imitative mind. For the purposes of effective leadership it is not necessary that all leaders be endowed with creative minds. It must be assumed only that creative minds have gone into making the plans that are to be carried out. In all our society, ideas and plans are wrought in the minds of creative leaders. They find their way to the masses of the people through the efforts of leaders who may possess only the basic qualities of sympathy with human aims, vision, and initiative. People are enabled, through this leadership of a lesser degree, to approximate the ideals of the creative leaders.

We have been so overborne by the idea that rural areas are lacking in leadership that we have been recreant in the matter of exploring the leadership possibilities. Undoubtedly, this debilitating inhibition arises from the supposed urban superiority to all things rural. Cities, no less than the country, have desolate areas made up of backward and leaderless populations. Recognition should be taken of the fact that environment does not necessarily produce leadership. The city has no advantage over the country in this respect. Leadership ability is native to normal people, and there is every evidence to support the claim that in proportion to population as many normal people live in the country as in the city. Based on

^{*} Rural Sociology, p. 518.

studies made of leadership potentialities in rural communities, liberal estimates accord to rural communities as high a ratio as cities. The creative or innovating type of leader may not be found in every typical rural congregation, but that parish is rare which does not possess several excellent leadership possibilities among the imitative class in its membership.

The problem, then, does not turn on whether the congregation has potential leaders sufficient for the task. This can be taken for granted. The immediate work is inspiring, educating, and training leaders. The country parish has depended too much upon transient leadership. This type has always lacked the elements of permanence and efficiency. What the country church needs most is men and women who, by careful and persistent training, are at one with the ideals of the priest and the needs of the people.

The rural pastor, in looking about for leaders for specific work in his parish, should take the attitude that he has someone in his parish who would be interested in taking a place of leadership if he were given a compelling motive and sufficient equipment. The responsibility of supplying both of these devolves upon the pastor as an essential part of his work. The counsel of wisdom will cause him to nurture carefully the leaders in his parish. He will never begrudge the time he devotes to them, because he will be rewarded by possessing a group who find increasing joy and satisfaction in a higher type and more intelligent form of service to the Church. His leaders must be led. They will need from him new inspirations and a more perfected technique. They will require also that he give them a renewed courage and a sense of well-doing in their work.

Diocesan summer conferences have been an immeasurable source of strength in the matter of training for leadership in the rural church. One could wish, however, that the curriculum authorities would visualize more definitely the rural church problem and offer certain courses in leadership train-

ing designed to meet its specific need.

The courses in leadership offered by the Department of Religious Education of the National Council cover a wide scope. Its National Accredited Leaders Association maintains standard courses for every department of the Church's activity. It offers every facility and encouragement to the rural pastor to enable him to give leadership training to the people in his parish.

PARISH STANDARDS

A so-called Par Standard for town and country churches grew out of the Interchurch World Movement. Its purpose was to set forth the items of equipment and program which were believed to be within the reach of any rural church. It was divided into five sections—Equipment, Pastor and Services, Finance, Religious Education, and Community Service and Co-operation. A modified form of the Par Standard, representing an ideal in both equipment and program for the Episcopal Church, is given below.

PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT

r. A church built, or remodeled, to meet needs and opportunities revealed by a careful study of the community.

2. A comfortable rectory.

3. Rooms, or a near-by building, for social and recreational purposes, with separate rooms (curtained or built) for individual Church school classes or departments.

4. Organ or piano.

- 5. Well-planned and adequately furnished kitchen.
- 6. Moving picture machine, or stereopticon.

7. Sanitary lavatories.

8. Bulletin boards for display of church announcements.

9. Near-by recreation field, with equipment.

10. Properties kept in order and repair inside and out—ful-filling a civic responsibility.

FINANCE

1. A church budget, including local expenses and missionary

quota, adopted annually by the congregation.

- 2. Every Member Canvass for weekly offering, made annually on basis of the budget; all Church members and attendants of Church services solicited.
- 3. Use of weekly duplex envelope system with effort to have each member of every family a regular contributor.

4. Monthly payment of current bills.

- 5. Keeping of accurate accounts by church treasurer with statements rendered to contributors at least once a quarter.
- 6. Systematic plan of payments on principal and interest of any church indebtedness.
 - 7. Adequate insurance of church properties.
 - 8. An annual audit.

SERVICES

- 1. At least one service of worship and Church school each Sunday.
 - 2. A regular midweek service, church night, or study group.
- 3. Junior church, or the like, connected with Sunday worship.

RELIGIOUS AND MISSIONARY EDUCATION

1. An every Sunday Church school.

2. Enrollment equal to membership, and an average attendance of two-thirds of its membership.

3. Graded lessons, as far as practical.

- 4. Provision for enlistment and training of leaders for Church and Church school work.
 - 5. Efficient Home Department and Cradle Roll.
 - 6. Religious vacation school and week-day school of religion.
- 7. Definite and regular attempts to bring children into Church membership, with specific preparation therefor.

8. Systematic mission study classes held regularly.

9. Missions regularly presented from the pulpit and in Church school.

MINISTRY

1. A rector resident within the community, giving full time to the parish.

2. An adequate salary.

3. Financial assistance in the matter of parish car, gas, and upkeep, where there is considerable farmstead visitation and missionary work.

4. Parish assisting its rector to attend summer schools and conferences.

PROGRAM

- r. Constant attempt to meet every need, condition, and opportunity for service, as revealed by a careful survey of the parish, such service to include all occupational classes and racial elements not otherwise provided for.
- 2. Definite plan and program, setting goals for the year's work, adopted annually by congregation and held steadily before the attention of the parish.
- 3. Assumption of responsibility for some part of the Church program (*i.e.*, regular stated service) by at least twenty-five per cent of the members.

- 4. A systematic effort to extend the parish to the limits of the "trade area."
- 5. Constant effort to mix town and country peoples, with a view to promoting a "community spirit" inclusive of the entire area.
- 6. A parish council, consisting of regularly appointed representatives of all agencies or neighborhoods co-operating in the community program, meeting every two months to consider and plan for needs and opportunities.

7. Systematic evangelism of the educational type reaching the entire community and every person in it, with special

attention to children and youth.

8. Definite organized activities (religious, social, and recreational) for the various age and sex groups.

9. Community service a definite part of parish program.

10. Regular scheme for farmstead visitation participated in by both rector and people.

11. An established goal for yearly increase in membership.

- 12. Use of buses, or volunteer automobiles, to bring children and others in to Church, Church school, or other activities at the center.
- 13. Biennial survey of the area served, to determine Church relationships of all persons living in the immediate community or adjacent countryside, with such mapping of parish (trade area) as shall show the relationship of every family to local and other religious institutions.
- 14. Cumulative study of social, moral, and religious forces of the community, with the aim of constant adaptation of program to the changing needs and opportunities as they may arise.

CO-OPERATION

- 1. Co-operation with diocesan and general Church programs.
- 2. Co-operation with local and near-by churches in community programs.
 - 3. Co-operation with local and community organizations.
 - 4. Co-operation with local and county agricultural agencies.
 - 5. Co-operation with state and county social agencies.

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CHAPTER III

WORSHIP

NEW approach to the whole idea of public worship is badly needed in the rural church. Placed on a negative basis, a procedure for initiating a new approach would be to "quit imitating the city church." Our city churches are worthy of imitation, but when the country church attempts to construct its services on city church plans, it does not possess, as a general rule, the facilities and equipment to make

its services much better than poor imitations.

We are guilty of giving such slavish allegiance to vested choirs and pipe organs that it is hard for us to conceive of a service at eleven o'clock on Sunday morning without them. They are helpful, but they are not essential. The minister and the congregation only are fundamental in worship. Services are discouraging and depressing because too much importance is attached to the choir. It is frequently so inadequate that it hinders worship. A recognition of the fact that very few country churches have the advantages of good voices and trained directors is a helpful beginning. These elements are necessary if we are to have a choir which is an aid to worship. A parish that can have a good choir is singularly fortunate, but where it is suspected that the choir is a deterrent to worship, it is far better to face that fact and give up the idea entirely. The country church need not think of itself as singularly deprived because it cannot have a choir. It has an alternative which makes it possible to accomplish an ideal of worship. This ideal is found in placing directly upon the congregation the responsibility for its worship. If its members are taught to depend upon themselves rather than upon a choir, this sense of responsibility will be developed, and a whole-hearted participation in the services will be gained. Through careful training, the services can achieve a heartiness and a reality that are rarely possible when a choir intervenes.

Congregational singing is universally neglected in the Church. There are many things which make it a difficult problem, and they cause this neglect. But it is maintained that the rural congregation has, as an excuse, fewer of these difficulties to contend with than the city congregation. The informality that is possible in the smaller congregation, and the comparative ease of reaching almost all the congregation with training in worship are the two factors that are in its favor. "Choir practice" for the entire congregation should be an important part of the activity of the parish. When a congregation has once realized that the worship is its own, and that it is to be carried on by all its members, it will be interested in learning how to make its worship as beautiful and as effective as possible.

The time set apart for the practice may be immediately following a service. As a supplement to this, a considerable part of the congregation may be persuaded to come to the church at some special time for more extended practice. Even though full participation in such a plan may not be secured from all the members of the congregation, if a representative number have entered into it they will have a leavening influence on the entire congregation. The heartiness and enthusiasm of their worship will spread to others, and ultimately the entire congregation will be drawn into the enterprise.

A congregation is always interested in learning new hymns. But they must learn them in an informal practice. Few people ever learn to sing hymns through hearing them sung in the regular services of the Church. The Church Hymnal has

stored in it an untold wealth of devotion, but it rarely comes to light in our rural church worship. We have depended too much on "the good old hymns which everybody knows." They are almost threadbare. People have become so accustomed to them that they sing them without interpretation or a search for new messages. A congregation should be kept busy learning hymns that are new to it. It is a good practice to rehearse a hymn with the congregation two or three times before it is used in a service. But when it is once used, it should be kept before the people by such frequent use that it becomes familiar to them.

The hymns appropriate to the season should be adhered to, as a general rule, but during the long Trinity season it is well to bring out of their hiding the many excellent hymns that are to be found in the Advent, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Whitsuntide sections of the book. These hymns have a theological significance which is especially applicable to the teaching of the season, but the hymns, no less than their theological teaching, should not be limited to the seasons themselves.

Singing the canticles of Morning and Evening Prayer is not a feat of great technical skill. The usual congregation sometimes joins timidly in singing a hymn, but canticles have always been surrounded by such an air of mystery that they are left entirely to the choir. Patient and consistent instruction will enable any congregation to overcome the fears it may have about singing the canticles, and through practice it can enter heartily into these great hymns of praise. The Hymnal has a section devoted to the principles of Anglican and Plainsong chanting. No great musical erudition is needed in order to understand them and put them into practice. Learning the canticles should be a regular part of the church music practice of the congregation. A beginning is made by studying one setting for each canticle, and later the

congregation will be eager to learn other settings, as it becomes more accustomed to chanting. It is strongly urged that the "Cathedral Pointing" be not used. This pointing was in general use prior to the publication of the New Hymnal. It was a crude and distorted adaptation of the ancient forms of Anglican and Plainsong chanting, and it is neither as simple nor as beautiful as the traditional method. The General Convention, through its Joint Commission on Church Music, has set the standard for chanting in its official publications, and rural congregations, for the sake of uniformity in worship, should strive to make these standards their own.

Many beautiful choral settings for the Holy Communion are now available for the use of the congregation. They are simple and melodious, and can be easily learned. When one setting has been mastered, a new one should be introduced. The congregation will take a deeper interest in learning its music if part of its practice is devoted to something new. When it has learned three or four choral settings of the Holy Communion, they can be alternated in their use and thereby obviate the danger of monotony. Choral settings for the Holy Communion are inexpensive, and for a small outlay each member of the congregation can be supplied with a copy.

The Joint Commission on Church Music has published a number of books and pamphlets which should be a part of every priest's working library. A book of great value is its "Choral Service." * It contains the liturgical music for Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, and the Holy Communion, with historical and analytical notes on the services. A congregational edition of this book, in inexpensive form, is available. The Psalter, containing the canticles pointed for Anglican chanting, is also published by the Joint Commission.

^{*} The Choral Service, H. W. Gray Co., New York, 1929.

An ideal for worship in the rural church is to try to have all the members of the Church present at one service on Sunday. This service should include the children of the Church school as well as the elders. An increasing number of rural churches are achieving excellent results by holding the Church school session immediately before the hour appointed for the Church service. No attempt is made to have a service of worship for the Church school. Its sessions are opened by a hymn and a prayer, and the pupils then go to their classes. When the class work is concluded, the entire school takes its place in the church for worship with the congregation. The sermon is placed at the end of the service. A hymn is sung before the sermon, and the younger children of the congregation are allowed to retire from the church. It is a plan that can be heartily recommended. It does away with the feeling of separation that has always existed between the Church school and the services of the Church. It makes the worship of the Church a regular part of the Church school, and it brings parents and children together for worship. Surely, it should be as normal for parents and children to come together in the house of God, their Father, as it is for them to be together under the family rooftree.

What has been said concerning choirs does not necessarily rule out children's choirs. They should be promoted as an activity for children rather than be used as a part of the worship of the congregation. The children's choir can be taught the hymns and the choral parts of the service, and as individual members of the congregation the choir will be of distinct assistance in the services. As an organization it can be given the opportunity to serve on special occasions.

A Servers' Guild is an excellent organization for enlisting the interest of the boys of a parish. The services can be arranged so that a considerable number of boys can be legitimately employed and, at the same time, given a purposive activity.

All regular services need the care and the guarding of steady caution. One of our chief efforts is to create in the people of our congregations a sense of the established order of the services. Any special activity which is designed for the purpose of giving people "something to do" should be avoided. It leads only to distraction, and it destroys the unity and co-

hesiveness of the Prayer Book services.

The organist and the organ are, separately and together, of fundamental importance in the Church's worship. The main function of an organist is playing accompaniments. This should always be distinct and, if necessity requires, it should even be bold. A trained choir may perhaps allow for showy and individualistic accompanying, but not congregational singing. This depends on the organist to lead with a clearly articulated accompaniment. The organ, likewise, must have the possibilities of being used in this manner. If a country church is afflicted with a little weak and wheezy reed organ, it can never expect its worship to be hearty. A congregation needs most of all a good foundation for its singing. The people of a parish should be willing to make many sacrifices in order to have a reliable organ. A small pipe organ is always to be preferred, but if it is not within the financial reach of the congregation, there are many excellent reed organs on the market which give admirable service.

A congregation may be fortunate enough to possess one or two members who have good solo voices. Their services can always be utilized. A solo at the time of the offering can be a valuable aid in worship, by bringing a particular message for the day.

The rural church can take excellent advantage of special days and occasions. Country people, because of the cohesive-

ness of their community life, maintain a lively interest in special observances. Many of them now have only a social meaning, whereas originally they had a religious significance. The Church can perform an excellent spiritual service to the community by bringing back many of these days to their original religious intent. Holidays of a patriotic nature should be given the religious impress of the Church. The secularizing tendency that is encroaching upon the great feast days of the Christian year should be combated by the services which stand forth before the community as the central observance of the occasions.

Every parish should have one particular day of its own. It may be a patronal festival, or one that commemorates the establishing of the Church in the community. "Home coming" should be a part of the observance of the day. The familial significance of "home coming" or "founders' day" should be emphasized. These observances of special days or occasions have as their greatest benefits the binding together of the community and the congregation in enterprises of common spiritual interest. The Church has so many fine traditions of days and occasions that she has the special privilege and the obligation of showing their spiritual significance to the people of the community.

The Church, in its accustomed forms of liturgical worship, sometimes takes its worship too much for granted. While liturgical forms carry worship to great depths of beauty and devotion, they also accentuate crudities. By the use of liturgical forms, the Episcopal Church, less than any other religious body, can ill afford to conduct its worship in a half-hearted and indifferent manner. Perfunctoriness is one of its special dangers. A service that is read too hastily, or conducted in a lackadaisical or indecisive manner, inevitably strikes false and disconcerting notes in worship.

It is possible to go even farther afield by including in the list of distractions such things as broken plaster or torn wall paper, broken window glass, squeaky pews, or a faded, sagging dossal curtain. Church people have always assumed that orderliness is a corollary of liturgical worship. Orderliness, however, should not be so restrictive in its application that it is made to pertain only to the form of worship itself. A steady effort should be made to the end that the atmosphere created by the material furnishings and settings of worship be consonant in every detail with the beauty and the majesty of the worship that is offered. Reverence should be the guiding principle in the worship of the Church. And reverence does not mean solely a certain mysterious and awesome attitude which is maintained towards God. Its application is wider and more intimate. It should embrace personal courtesy-courtesy to man as well as to God. It is doubtful if reverence towards God can be maintained if there is not a sympathetic respect for people who are seeking God.

The objective of reverence should never be lost to sight. Its chief end should always be a realization of the sense of the presence of God—a sense that answers the deepest craving of the human heart. A grandeur of physical setting is no more necessary to a realization of God's holiness and love than is a palace necessary to a realization of the blessed relationships of the Christian home. Moreover, all that is implied by the worship of God makes necessary a compliance with the courtesies and considerations of life. These are just as essential in the church as they are in the home. These fundamentals of reverence compel, therefore, a careful, and even meticulous regard for the appointments of worship. It is God's house where His children meet to worship. It has been dedicated to Him and He covenants to be with

them.

CHAPTER IV

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE RURAL PARISH

southern Bishop, while ministering to his rural missions, found that one Church school had been suspended apparently for lack of children in the church. His comment was that "a church without a Church school is an anomaly," and thereupon he organized the congregation of adults into a school. It met the hour before the regular morning service. The people were honest in believing that there were no children for a Church school, but, strangely enough, soon after the adult school began to function, classes were required for children and young people. It is scarcely necessary to say that the people of this rural mission now enjoy their Church school. Their Church life has taken on a new depth of meaning and a new power of usefulness.

Interest in the Church, devotion to its mission in the world, and a developing Christian life are all dependent on learning. The great majority of our rural church problems would vanish almost miraculously if a well-adapted program of religious education were carried out in each of our rural parishes and mission stations. If Church schools are small in size, it is hard to be convinced that they are of importance. And sometimes, if there are only four or five children in the church, the next step is to be persuaded that there are no children for a Church school. The point of emphasis should be changed. It is not that of struggle to maintain a Church school, but rather a striving to train and develop the children of the Church. The four or five children in a rural mission station have individually as much right to religious training as if they were mem-

bers of a Church school of five hundred in a city parish. We think too much in terms of the group. The large city church must necessarily carry on its work through groups, but its purpose is to reach and minister to the individual in the group. In the rural church the group is not always to be had, but because of this the obligation to minister to the individual child is not lessened. By reason of the necessity of working with the individual, it is even conceivable that the quality of work in the rural Church school can surpass that in a city church.

There must be resiliency of approach and method in all rural church work. The basic importance of the "teacher-pupil" factor in the work should never be lost to sight. Equipment, group organization, and methods should be given a place of lesser importance. This is in no manner a turning back to the old pre-parish house and pre-graded lesson days. It is an appeal to fit religious education to the needs of the individual in conformity with conditions as they are found in each rural parish. A Church school composed of six or eight people of assorted ages, meeting in a living room, school-house, or out of doors, is just as much a Church school as five hundred carefully graded children meeting in a commodious parish house. Its purpose is the same; and purpose, not organization, constitutes a Church school.

The ideal of rural religious education is that which was carried into action by the Bishop in this story—the whole parish learning about our Lord and His Church. A program of religious education can be made the most interesting, valuable, and happy enterprise in which people can engage. It must, however, be interesting. The Church and religion in rural towns are subject to the competition of secular amusements, much the same as they are in the city, with only the difference that in the city they come in a greater variety of forms. The

rural church's appeal must be adequate to challenge these growing secular interests. Making rural people feel the need of such a program inheres in the work of the rural priest. In his ability to cause people to "desire earnestly the best gifts," he is put to his greatest test of spiritual creativeness. Their feeling of the need does not come with the luggage of Church tradition, nor apparently from baptismal vows. It must be continuously created anew.

We have said that the Church has a definite obligation to serve the community. With equal force, the argument applies to the obligation of the Church to serve the individual member. We expect the member of the Church to be of service to the Church in its great mission in the world, but how is he to serve? The Church has not put enough thought into giving him an idea of such service. We should have a great many more people serving the Church joyfully and generously if they were given compelling motives. But these motives cannot be supplied except by the educative processes that are implicit in a carefully planned program of religious education.

A learning people is a growing people, and of necessity a growing people must be a worshiping people. All religious education should have as its goal for people an ever-deepening sense of the presence of God, union with Him, and a knowledge of His purpose. Intelligible worship, through religious education, is the chief means by which these ends are accomplished. The rural Church, therefore, has a story she must tell, a subject she must teach—the Kingdom of God. It was our Lord's subject, and it embraces the great drama of redemptive life.

No better background for the curriculum of religious education in a rural parish can be found than in the more or less obvious forms through which we work every day in our Church life. The Prayer Book is the Church's textbook of worship and, like all textbooks, it needs teaching. The better our people know their Prayer Book, the more satisfying and self-giving will be their worship. Its services follow the Christian Year, and the Christian Year embraces the life and teachings of our Lord. The life of our Lord, the history of the Church, the meaning of the Creeds, and the mission of the Church are all subjects that people have heard about "from their youth up." But hearing about them does not imply a knowledge that moves to conviction, nor a conviction that moves to action. Teaching, learning, increasing, growing—these all are of the very essence of the Christian life, and they are as much the rightful heritage of our inarticulate few in rural places as they are of our vocal many in centers of great population.

The rural pastor, therefore, is never working more nearly at the center of the life of his parish than when he is carrying forward a well-planned and comprehensive program of religious education—a program which embraces every soul in his parish. His is not only the happy work of inspiring and planning a program, but through it all he must be the chief teacher. Greater technical equipment, imaginativeness, and conviction are demanded of him for this task than for any other phase of his work. And yet the rewards of a life of service to rural people are not met with in greater abundance than in a program which is carried through with his people year after year. We call it a program of religious education, but it must not lose its soul in the mazes of pedagogical technicalities. The great objective is that the people of his parish shall "grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

No attempt is made in this chapter to set forth a specific curriculum for religious education in the rural parish. The Church in this respect has many excellent resources. The aim in the discussion that follows is that of emphasizing certain elements and considerations which should form the background of the religious education program.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

One of the most heartening realizations that has come in the field of education is that adults are still capable of learning. Professor Thorndike has shown that the adult's ability to learn diminishes very slightly between 25 and 65 years of age. After 65 the acuteness of his mind depends upon the intensity of mental activity prior to that age. Perhaps a religious education program for adults would not need such primary emphasis as it is receiving today if it could ever be taken for granted that training in childhood and youth had really been worthy of the name. But this can never be done. If, moreover, it is found that a few souls in the parish have had good training, invariably it is found also that they are the ones who are the most interested in a program of religious education.

The adult class is not always practicable at the Church school session. The best results and the deepest interest of the class form of adult religious education can often be achieved when the class meets separately on some convenient week nights. There are many advantages in having the class meet apart from the session of the Church school. The principal one is that longer sessions can be held, affording time for a more comprehensive treatment of the lesson and an opportunity for social contacts.

In planning a course for an adult class, it is well to have expressions from the group as to their choice of subjects. It has been found helpful to make up the year's study from three interesting and related subjects rather than to attempt the exhaustive treatment of one subject. A good norm is that a subject should not run for a longer period than three months. The class should be suspended during December to allow for the Christmas preparations and activities in which adults are invariably engaged. Perhaps another short vacation of two weeks would be appropriate immediately after Easter, and a third and longer vacation might come during the months of July and August.

The adult class can be made to have two important functions in its relationship with the Sunday Church school. It can form the group interest which may inspire some among its members to become teachers. It can become a parent-teacher association of the school. This association may be so constituted that it will promote Church school attendance, recruit new pupils, improve the quality of work at home and at school, and assume some responsibility for social activities. Assistance such as this group can give will solve many of the pastor's Church school problems.

TEACHER TRAINING

The problem of securing teachers for our rural Church schools is always acute, but there is consolation in the fact that Church school teachers, unlike poets, are made—they are rarely born. The rector's task, then, is one of making teachers. No greater multiplication of the rector's manifold spiritual services to his parish can be found than in building up a consecrated and efficient corps of teachers.

Discouragement over being unable to secure qualified teachers is usually unwarranted. To expect a person, however qualified he may be otherwise, to be immediately interested in teaching a Church school class is not reasonable. Teaching is a vocation that needs to be cultivated. Something of its ideals and techniques must be given a prospective teacher before an

enthusiastic response can be expected. Many teachers in our rural Church schools are held only by their fidelity to the Church and a conviction that a Church school should be maintained at all cost. Many of these also could be made to find a deep satisfaction and joy in their work if they could be given an understanding of the real service they are performing in Church school teaching. The rural pastor is wise who gives much time to the individual teacher. His own teaching mission to his people is immeasurably strengthened by enlisting and training consecrated men and women as teachers.

THE BACKGROUND OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL CURRICULUM

The impossibility of setting up a Church school curriculum in a rural school according to the principles set for a large city school is quite apparent. It should not even be attempted. The rural church which can have a fully graded school, with each grade working at one and the same time, is the exception. The fundamental purpose of graded courses is that the subject and treatment shall be fitted to the psychological age of the child, and that the child shall progress from one course to the other as he advances in psychological age. It is this only that is in the mind of the religious education authorities who formulate the graded courses. A school may have only two classes, but if the children in these classes are near the same age it is possible to carry them through the entire system.

There is also the matter of equipment. Graded courses sometimes call for equipment that is not available to the rural school. This, however, need not be a deterrent to their use. It simply places the necessity of greater resourcefulness and imagination upon the Church school teacher. The equipment problem must not be considered hopeless in the rural school until all the possibilities of equipment have been investigated. The equipment available may be a substitute for that which is suggested, and it may serve quite as well because imagination and creativeness have gone into supplying it.

There is much to be said in favor of a uniform series of lessons in the rural Church school. The content of the lesson is the same for all ages, and this factor makes it possible for the rector to use the lesson as the subject for his weekly instruction of teachers. He should be able to supply them not only with a richer background than they can get for themselves, but also with suggestions for the presentation of the content of the lesson to the classes.

The rural pastor must be continually at grips with the problem of grading his children according to psychological age. As is often the case, the school is fortunate if its children fall into primary, intermediate, junior, and senior classifications. As far as possible, these should be the groupings. It is better to have two children working together as a junior group than to place them with six children in a senior group. The pastor is often guilty of doing this because of the difficulties he encounters in securing a teacher for two children. Some little schools defy every kind of classification standards. In this situation more skill is demanded from the teacher than in any other that he will encounter. The groupings as to ages must be made as closely as possible, and regardless of the disparity of ages there is real opportunity for each member of the class to work according to his age interest. While classes of the same age find it congenial to engage in activities as a group, the members of this class must find expression in home work, service, and social activities on a more individual basis. The teacher must be on the alert to give to each child the pedagogical consideration that is due his age.

A word of praise should be added concerning a method of teaching that is an ally of all other methods. It is perhaps the oldest and most universal of all—the story. It is admirably suited to the rural Church school, because it can be made to break through the impediments of unsatisfactory age groupings and teach its lesson to each member of the class. The story is almost always a part of other methods, and its value increases educationally when it is thus used.

A variation of the story method of teaching is the stereopticon lecture. This is being used increasingly in country churches. The Lantern Slide Bureau of the National Council and a number of agencies supply slides and lectures for a nominal cost. They can be had singly or in series. The subjects embrace Bible stories, the geography of Bible lands, religious art, the doctrine of the Church, her missionary activities, and her history.

CHURCH SCHOOL WORSHIP

The ideal of Church school worship can be expressed in the same terms as that of the Church school curriculum—each child worshiping according to his psychological age. The grouping for worship does not have to be as strictly marked as for class work, but at least the primary children should be given a special grouping. Their hymns and their prayers must be adapted to their years, and, while a point may be stretched in the matter of grouping all the older children together, it should never be made to include the primary folk. The worship of the older children is often unintelligible to them, and they are cheated if they are forced into modes of worship that are unreal.

Every part of the Church school worship should have the background of instruction. Training in worship should be the underlying principle upon which the whole school operates. It is from this foundation that all the other courses should branch out. The hymns should be taught with the meaning of praise. A new hymn, with its new spiritual message, needs teaching as much as the lesson for the day. The hymns should be as carefully chosen with respect to the age of the children as are the courses of instruction. The prayers should have the same consideration as the hymns. They must be made to echo in the child's soul something of his own spiritual need, experience, and aspiration. The Prayer Book, the Church's great repository of religious faith through the ages, should become the rich storehouse of spiritual treasure for the boys and girls of the Church schools. Its prayers and praises, with their history and meaning, should be taught continuously in order that the significance of the Church Year and the different services and their meaning may become progressively a part of the child's life.

CHILDREN'S EUCHARIST

The Holy Communion is the Church's central act of worship, and Churchmen are coming more and more to see that its meaning for the individual soul must be based on the experiences of childhood. It is the great drama of redemption, and as a drama it is full of the kind of action that can be understood by children. Surely, men are lacking in appreciation of our Lord's purpose in instituting the Sacrament if they work on the hypothesis that the meaning of Eucharistic worship must be limited to adult years when people are supposed to be theological-minded.

The children's Eucharist is generally thought practicable only when the services of two priests are available—one to celebrate and the other to give the instruction, but the in-

struction can be given by a well-trained layman or lay woman. Many parishes are using the children's Eucharist increasingly as the regular worship of the Church school. In time the children progress beyond the need of detailed instruction and are able to enter normally into the service.

The children's Eucharist lends itself admirably to the "teaching by participation" method of instruction. The instructions which accompany the celebration must be of the very simplest kind. The instructor should not try to teach anything beyond the comprehension of the youngest child. He must remember that the Christian comes into an appreciation of the Eucharist progressively, as he appropriates all other great teachings of his faith. This does not imply, however, that the instruction must be partial. It should be complete, but with a completeness that is adapted to the years of childhood.

WEEK-DAY RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The burden of religious instruction which we try to thrust upon our Sunday Church schools is appalling. The average Church school pupil spends about twenty-five hours a year in class work. No one who has faced the problem can hold that a serious work in training children and young people in the Christian life can be done in that amount of time.

This meager effort must be supplemented by a program of week-day religious education. In many communities the public schools co-operate with the week-day classes of the churches by allowing pupils to go to their churches for classes during school hours. Religious instruction in the churches is sometimes carried as a course in the public school curriculum, and credit is granted the pupil for class work done in his parish. But whether or not there is this encouragement and co-operation from the public school authorities, the need for weekday instruction is no less palpable. In many rural churches where there is no co-operation, Saturday mornings or afternoons are used for class periods. This is not ideal, but it can serve until the community is prepared for a more advanced educational project in co-operation with its religious forces.

RELIGIOUS VACATION SCHOOLS

The religious vacation school can be made to go far towards supplying the inadequacies of the regular Church school. It is not to be thought of as a substitute for a parish Church school, but rather an opportunity to increase the number of hours of religious instruction for each child, and to do more intensified work.

The time for holding the school is determined by local circumstances, but the weeks following the end of the public school session have been found the most suitable. The school generally runs from two weeks to a month. The daily sessions are confined to the morning hours. If the age range is not too great the service of one teacher is sometimes sufficient. Better work will be done in any case by two teachers, as they will be enabled to classify the children more accurately. They can also divide between themselves the more specialized activities of the school.

A definite curriculum should be outlined and planned before the beginning of the school. A typical daily program can be made to include the following activities:

- 1. Devotional period with hymns.
- 2. Class session on the doctrine of the Church.
- 3. Recreational period.
- 4. Class work on Bible study, using the story method, lantern slides, and plays.
 - 5. Singing.

The devotional period should sometimes include celebrations of the Holy Communion. The recreational period can be made up of health programs, handcraft, and suitable games. An outing should be given at some time during the session of the school. The school should end with closing exercises at which the parents are asked to be present.

YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE CHURCH SCHOOL

It is estimated that there are more than five million rural young people who are not members of any Christian body. The Church must take seriously to heart the responsibility that devolves upon her in trying to reach these young people. More than any other group in rural life they are "as sheep

without a shepherd."

If we examine our parish activities with regard to the needs of young people, we often find that our Church services are designed for an adult group and our Church school is planned for children. Since young people are neither adults nor children, their interests are touched only at the fringes; yet at no time in life does personality need to be worked with at the center more than in youth. If they are to be held to the Christian way of life they must be given a vital part in the life of the Church. Much of their lack of interest in the Church is justifiable. Most of the preaching is not meant for them, and they have never been made to feel that they have any responsibility for the Church. A consistent presentation of the meaning of Church life must be made from the youth point of view. The adolescent gap that now obtains in the rural Church must be closed by a winning and adventuresome challenge of a youth program in each rural parish.

The Church school has always offered a ready medium through which the work for young people can be carried on. The Church school class readily lends itself as the basis for organizing the young people of a parish. The class with its religious instruction must be the chief enterprise of the group, but out of it can come their week-day social, educational, recreational, and service activities. They can also be encouraged to identify themselves with the diocesan organization of young people and thereby share in the larger life and activities of the Church.

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CHAPTER V

RURAL CHURCH EXTENSION

CHURCH extension in this chapter is treated in its twofold aspect: first, as it applies to the established parish and mission, and, secondly, as it concerns the work of extending the Church into new communities and areas.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM

The whole matter of personal evangelism turns on the question, "What is the parish?" If the answer is that it is a group of needy sinners who must spend all their time in keeping in a state of spiritual repair, nothing more need be said. The parish is a spiritual hospital and its inmates are too infirm to make any effort that takes them beyond the hospital bed of their own souls' welfare! But if the parish is thought of as an outpost of God's Kingdom and membership in it is regarded as being "faithful soldiers and servants" of Christ Jesus, then the barriers of timidity, conservatism, and traditionalism are broken through. It becomes a missionary power. The mission of the Church in the world and the layman's work as a force in extending its message become real, actual, and practical.

The thinking of Churchmen about the "outsiders'" attitude toward the Church is sometimes immature and naïve. We dwell fondly on the thought that rural people are seeking the Episcopal Church as a way of life. We should not go that far. They are seeking a normal, reasonable, and satisfying religious expression, but they do not know that they can find

it in the Episcopal Church. And they never will know until the splendid spiritual force latent in the lay membership of our town and country parishes is aroused and utilized to make Christ and His Church known to people. The deadening effect of our timidity can be counteracted only by a definite plan of evangelism.

Evangelism is often in disfavor because it seems to betoken a campaign. People are weary of campaigns. Their results rarely seem commensurate with the efforts involved. People have become callous to their appeals, and have developed successful defenses against them. The point that is insisted upon is that evangelism should not be a campaign, but rather a normal and basic element in the life of each parish, as normal as its Church school or its finances.

The average member of the Episcopal Church labors under the handicap of three unnerving inhibitions about evangelism. One of them is that it is bad taste. Evangelism is still thought of as the old strident emotionalism of bygone days. Another is that the Episcopal Church is a conservative organization, and that going out to seek converts comports with neither her dignity nor her tradition. The third is that the average layman considers the doctrine, discipline, and worship of the Church complicated. He is not sure of his ground when he attempts to explain them, and he is fearful that he may misrepresent them. The types of evangelistic effort that went along with the "revival" and "the protracted meeting" are distinctly outmoded, but they have left a valuable residue in the form of personal evangelism. This method is being adapted and utilized increasingly in the Church and it has been followed by excellent and lasting results.

The Church in the town and country is having a harder struggle to keep from falling behind in communicant strength than ever before. In the past, it has relied upon two sources for its growth: the regular increase from the children who came up through Church school to Confirmation, and the new communicants who moved into the parish. Rural families are not as large as they were twenty or even ten years ago, and few Church families are now moving from one rural community to another. But even if these two factors of growth were favorable they would not mitigate the necessity the Church is under of making known the good news of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to rural people.

Sentimental ideas about rural people and their fidelity to the Church are contrary to the facts. In proportion to their population they have a far greater number of people who make no professions of allegiance to organized religion than do city folk. One great charter alone for definite and yearin-and-year-out evangelistic effort in rural areas is that there are more than fifteen and a half million white rural people

who are not members of any religious body.

It is implied in normal Church life that we bring people to Confirmation. The Bishop comes to the parish once a year for his official visit. The date of his visit is generally known several months in advance. We still think, that one among the important reasons for his visit shall be the confirming of those who are candidates for Confirmation. Securing and preparing candidates has devolved almost exclusively upon one person—and that person is the rector or priest-in-charge. The people of the Church have tacitly accepted such a view of their priest's work, and the priest himself has seemed willing to allow them to continue undisturbed in this attitude. Is it any wonder that confirmation classes are small in number? Need we be surprised that the priest's discouragement over the annually recurring problem of securing confirmation candidates mounts as his classes grow smaller?

Priests and leaders of rural congregations are often faced

with the fact that lay activities in the parish are below the standards of the interests, talents, and abilities of their people. They have often wondered if there is really a fine and challenging work they can give their people to do. Raising money to meet the budget, the repairs and upkeep, the dinners and the bazaars are all necessary, but it is so difficult to make the spiritual "transfer" in them that they rarely call out a definite spiritual response from their people. Our people are not challenged often enough with real spiritual activity. The corporate spiritual life of the parish should always be pointed towards clear-cut and individual spiritual expression. The ever-recurring services of the Church, the communions and the sermons should lead inevitably to some such expression. If people are taught to regard the Church as basic and integral in their lives, it is possible also to make them realize that their sense of stewardship impels them to share their spiritual treasure with others. Evaluating things and institutions is one of the characteristics of the day. As Church people we are facile in telling of the values of almost everything, but for intelligent Christian people who are supposed to be under the power of a great conviction we are singularly inarticulate concerning the values we find in our religion.

PERSONAL EVANGELISM PLAN

The plan of personal evangelism described below is the result of sixteen years' experience in evangelistic efforts in rural churches. It comes out of the endeavor of one parish priest to help his brother priests. He drew on every available source known to him for ideas, plans, and projects. His steady purpose has been to keep away from the campaign or "drive" aspect of such an effort, and to present it as a plan which becomes a normal part of the work of the parish. This note

should be struck at the beginning and constantly kept to the fore throughout the entire initial effort.

There are three main purposes running through the plan. The first one is to build up a group of consecrated laymen and lay women, of youth and adults, who will undertake the most important and basic work in our Christian life-that of bringing souls to our Lord Jesus Christ. The second purpose, and it is stated without apology, is to increase the membership of the Church. The third one is that the Church may make the contribution of an increased number of Christian citizens to the community. As members of the Church we are fond of the phrases, "Numbers do not mean anything," and "The Episcopal Church wields an influence that is out of all proportion to its numbers." It is agreed that numbers do not mean everything, but they do mean more than we wish to imply when we make the statement. As to the influence of the Episcopal Church being out of all proportion to its numbers—that, too, is admitted. But the same can be said of every other religious group. Both statements are outmoded rationalizations for our spiritual inertia. They in no measure meet the palpable needs of a civilization which has a strong virus of paganism coursing through its life. The Church must have numbers. On a mere basis of membership, we can say that while numbers do not mean everything, at least they argue that more people are in a Christian context in which they are more likely to mean something than if they remained outside of it.

PRELIMINARY PREPARATION

The beginnings of the preparation must be with the priest himself. His preaching and teaching must take on a definite evangelistic note. For three or four months before the plan is announced to his people, evangelism—carrying the thought of the layman's privilege and responsibility to win souls to our Lord—is given an almost exclusive emphasis. If this type of preaching and teaching is thought of as dreary, it is because the broad implications of evangelism have been narrowed in the priest's own mind. The motive of evangelism itself is as deep and broad as that of the earthly ministry of our Lord.

In the preparatory preaching, three emphases should be

1. The Christian responsibility of the layman in making known the Gospel of Jesus Christ as the revelation in which the purpose of God for His creation is made known to man.

2. The necessity of the Church in God's purpose for man.

3. That our Lord's "Go ye into all the world" was intended for the laity as well as for the clergy.

The laity should be brought to realize, through this specialized preaching, that their lack of effort to bring people to Christ through His Church constitutes their greatest disloyalty to Him and His cause; that it is tantamount to a lack of belief in Him. Something of the ideal of personal evangelism is contained in the simple yet moving story of Andrew finding his brother, Peter, and telling him that he had found the Messiah. He immediately brought Peter to Jesus. Nothing can be more searching or salutary for the members of a congregation than actually to be confronted with the question as to whether they have indeed found the Messiah. They should be made to realize that the power of the Holy Ghost has surely been given to them in Baptism and Confirmation, but the real test is-Have they regarded this power as a regenerative force working through their lives to kindle the fire of the Spirit in others? There is no need, however, to elaborate further on the type and character of this preparatory preaching. The Gospel story is patently so rich a source that a mere recalling of the purpose of the effort will flood the mind with material. In order that the plan in its initial stages may be carried through effectively and thoroughly, a period of six to eight months should be devoted to it. The first step is to announce the plan and its purpose in its entirety. This can be done at a special meeting of the members of the parish. The call to the members of the parish should go out in such a way that the purpose of the meeting is not declared. This precaution is suggested because it helps to keep the factors of predisposing ideas and opinions from either operating against attendance at the meeting, or destroying the atmosphere of expectancy and freshness when the plan is set forth. If the preparatory preaching and teaching have been done carefully, and the members of the congregation have been presented again and again with the evangelistic message, there is little danger that the plan will not be enthusiastically received.

The most effective method of getting the purpose and the plan to the people at this first meeting is for the rector to make a brief and clear statement of what he hopes he can lead his people to accomplish through this evangelistic effort. He may recall the principal themes he has tried to follow in his sermons and instructions during the previous two or three months. These should embrace the more graphic points of his preaching, and in résumé they should constitute a call to action. This call can be based on the theme of the personal influence of the Christian. It should revolve about the thought of the Christian's constant influence with his family and friends; that he undoubtedly desires the best and the highest for them; and that therefore the greatest contribution he can make to their lives is that of leading them into conscious relationship with our Lord through His Church.

It is necessary to have ready at hand mimeographed pages containing a statement of the purpose and a brief outline of the plan. A copy is given to each person. There is also distributed a printed card in an envelope addressed to the rector. The card should bear some statement such as this:

"(Signed)....."

The following is a suggested form for the mimeographed pages of the purpose and plan:

The Purpose

The Plan

r. The members of the parish are asked to keep the cards one week. They are asked to read the plan carefully, to think about it, and then to pray for the guidance of the Holy Spirit as to what their decision shall be. If it is favorable to the plan, they enroll by signing and mailing the card. If they do not feel that they can make the effort they are asked to destroy it.

2. After the cards are returned, the workers are organized into a prayer, study, and instruction group on personal evangelism. The basis of the prayer life of the workers might well be the one sentence prayer used by the Five Year Evangelistic Movement of the Chinese Church, "Lord, revive thy Church, beginning with me." The meetings of the group are held once each week for eight weeks. After this intensive period of training, the group will meet once each month for report, counsel, and discussion.

3. Each communicant who engages in the plan is asked to select a friend who is not a member of any Christian body, and try through the period of the personal evangelism effort to bring him to Baptism and Confirmation.

4. Within the month this person is to be approached on the matter. He should be told that the Church needs him as he

undoubtedly needs the Church and the faith for which she stands, but that he must investigate and study the Church, her ways and her life, before he comes to a decision.

5. The lay worker's first effort with the person he is trying to influence for the Church is to see that he gets to the services of the Church. If inviting him to come is not enough, he must try to bring him. He is to be with him in the services and help him to enter into the worship.

6. Two months before the culmination of the initial effort, a class meeting weekly for confirmation instruction will be organized. The lay worker is to bring his friend to each of these in-

structions.

7. Three weeks before the Bishop comes for Confirmation, decision will be asked of those who have maintained a steady interest

during the previous five months.

8. The Personal Evangelism Plan closes with a preaching mission which lasts eight days. It begins on Sunday morning, and closes the following Sunday morning. On this last Sunday of the mission there will be a corporate communion of the entire membership of the parish at an early hour. At this service the lay workers who have been engaged in this effort will dedicate themselves anew to personal work for the cause of Christ and His Church. At the later morning service the Bishop makes his visit for Confirmation.

9. During the mission, the lay worker is expected to bring, not only his "candidate" whom he hopes to have confirmed at the close of the mission, but also a new "candidate" whom he will try to bring to Confirmation in the next year.

10. As an added effort, the worker will be on the alert to find children who should be baptized and brought to the Church

school.

11. He will also try to influence at least one lapsed communicant to return to the Church and her Sacraments.

An announcement of the date of the mission, who the missioner will be, with some note of personal interest about him, should be given at the special parish meeting when the plan is first announced.

The mission, and something about the meetings of the

workers' group, should be kept before the congregation at each service throughout the period of the endeavor.

The lay workers' group should not be a formal organization in the parish. It is a class of instruction for *individuals* who are engaging in *personal* work, and it should never be diverted from this purpose.

The confirmation services should become the high point of the parish's work each year by making them glowing demonstrations of the life and zeal of the parish. The thought of personal effort can be carried still further by changing the usual custom of the Church in confirmation services, so that instead of all the candidates kneeling at the altar rail at one time, they come one by one and kneel before the Bishop who is seated at the midst in the sanctuary. As each candidate steps forward he is accompanied by his "sponsor" in the person of the lay worker who has been with him in his months of preparation for Church life.

The earlier service on the Sunday after Confirmation may also be made the occasion of the first communion of those who have been confirmed. At this service, too, the newly confirmed and the "sponsor" may come together to receive Holy Communion.

The "sponsor" feature of the plan is given a large place because it carries with it the notes of spiritual responsibility and Christian brotherhood. If the most treasured things of our lives are built upon the basis of friendship and brotherly love, then these blessed relationships can be utilized in their deepest redemptive aspects as they become consecrated in a spiritual relationship.

The "follow-up" work of this plan is confined largely to people who have become interested in the Christian life mainly through the intensive effort of the mission. All the awakened interest that accrues from the mission must be carefully conserved and fostered. Cards which, when signed, will in some way indicate a special interest should be distributed during the mission. These signed cards will form the beginning for the evangelistic effort of the following year.

It is important not to think of the mission feature of this first year's effort as a part of the normal parish program. The second year's effort should be much simpler in plan, and can

be adapted as follows:

About seven months before the Bishop makes his episcopal visit, the congregation should be told that the lay group of the past year will meet again for several weekly instructions, and that if there are others who wish to join this group for the new effort, they will be gladly welcomed. The group itself should be urged to recruit new workers from members of the parish. After these meetings have been held, the lay workers should meet once each month for the purpose of fostering a corporate devotional life. This should look towards a deeper consecration of themselves and to an improved method of work. The devotional part of each meeting should precede everything else. It should be carefully planned. The hymns and prayers should be of a personal and searching nature. The group instructions should be confined to methods of work, the teaching of the Church, and how to present it.

As for the new members of the Church, it will be recalled that they have had an active part in the Church's life and worship for several months and so require little of what is known as "follow up." It is advised, however, that a communicants' class be organized for eight or ten instructions. This class should follow very soon after Confirmation. It has as its purpose a more advanced training in Church life.

The "literature" used in this personal evangelism plan is of great importance. An annotated list is suggested at the end of the chapter.

The training of the lay worker and the use of literature must go hand in hand. But it is strongly urged that the lay worker be not allowed to become simply a distributor of church literature. Although the endeavor should be towards creating in the parish a group of well-informed and convinced Church people, the time to introduce the literature element in the work is only when the interest of the prospective candidate for Church life prompts him to go deeper into the study of the Church. The lay worker, himself, is to witness, to share, to evangelize, and no easy way of satisfying the conditions, such as passing out leaflets, will build up in the parish the ideal that is hoped for.

The number of people who enlist as "workers" in a parish should never be a matter of such concern that the plan is made to stand or fall thereon. If only one or two people join in the effort, it is probably a gain over the number that were definitely engaged in the work theretofore. The number of workers is to be built up gradually. While every member of the Church, by virtue of his baptismal vows, is nominally an evangelist, it is a fact that every member does not "do the work of an evangelist." The message, the obligation, and the privilege must be presented again and again. It must come with the freshness of the approach of contemporary spiritual needs and Christian ideals. The rector must be, in and through the whole endeavor, the priest, the prophet, and the chief evangelist. He is leading all his people, or a group called out from their number, into a deeper experience of Christian life and service. He himself must be prepared. The technical part of his preparation, as it applies to method of work, is not difficult to obtain, but his spiritual preparation must be a constant sanctifying of himself "for their sakes." His prayers, his communions, and his meditations should be dedicated to the one purpose of his having the wisdom, the counsel, and

the ghostly strength that he may have to give to those who are dependent upon him for inspiration and leadership.

ESTABLISHING THE CHURCH IN NEW AREAS

Methods of establishing the Church in rural areas where it is very little known, or wholly unknown, is a matter that has never received coherent consideration from the Church. The bases on which the Church is justified in efforts to establish new missions in communities are considered in Chapter VII. Once it is determined that the Church should organize a mission in a community, the effort to establish it should not be one of timid experiment. This kind of effort has characterized too much of the work of extending the Church into new areas. It is far better that nothing at all be done if there is to be only a half-hearted and unconvincing attempt. To be successful in establishing a mission, conviction as to the place of the Church in the community must come first. This can come only after a thorough study of the community and its area has been made. Following this, clear and definite plans must be made for carrying through the project.

The beginnings of a new mission in most cases depend upon a nucleus of interest in the Church. This nucleus of interest may be found in only one or two families who are members of the Church, or in a small group of people who have at some time had contact with the Church and wish to know more about it. Regardless of the size or type of the group, it is always a valuable asset and should be utilized as fully as possible.

The two methods of establishing a mission that have been used most generally may be named the "teaching mission" and the "class" method. They are both amenable to wide variations in their application to specific needs.

THE TEACHING MISSION

The so-called "teaching mission" method may be considered as a spectacular calling of attention to the plan of establishing a church in the community. It has real value in that it arouses curiosity as to what the Episcopal Church is. As people in rural areas, no less than their city brethren, are eager "to hear some new thing," a community interest may be depended upon.

There should always be two, and preferably three, missioners in an effort of this kind. One of them should be able to lead the singing; another should give the instructions, and a

third should do the preaching.

The preparation for the mission can be confined to newspaper publicity and posters. If there is a group in the community which is interested in the Church, some of its members can often be relied upon to become active in promoting attendance at the mission.

The mission can be held in a rented hall or store building or out of doors. The place for the services is largely determined by the weather, the season of the year, and the customs

of the people.

The services at the beginning should be of the most informal type. It is advised that the clergy do not wear vestments until near the close of the mission, and then only after their significance has been carefully explained. The hymns should be of the evangelical type, as the people will undoubtedly be more familiar with this kind of church music. Effort should be made to have the hymn singing as hearty as possible. It will go far toward creating a receptive and congenial atmosphere for the teaching and message that are to follow. The prayers should be selected with care, and read effectively. While, as

Episcopalians, we discount "straining after effect," we must remember that the people to whom we are trying to commend the Church have, in all likelihood, been reared in an evangelical tradition, and it is in this tradition that we find the strong

personal and lyrical elements in worship.

The teaching part of each service should be given the greater amount of time and the primary emphasis. It should be a simple and interesting presentation of the doctrine, discipline and worship of the Church. The note as to the superficial differences between the Episcopal Church and other Christian bodies should never be brought in. It is not necessary. If deductions are to be drawn, it is better to leave them to the people themselves. A spirit of denominational factionalism has no place in the Church at any time, and least of all in the effort to win people to our Lord. The "teacher" of the mission should carefully guard against trying to cover the whole scope of the Church's teaching. Better results can be obtained by a few clearly presented fundamental teachings than by an attempt to touch briefly on the whole system of the Church's belief and practice. Discursiveness must be shunned as the greatest enemy in such a teaching effort.

The sermon which follows the instruction should not be over fifteen minutes in length. It should be a cogent and stirring presentation of the Christ of the Church; whom she conceives Christ to be; what He should mean to the individual, and how union with Him is found in the sacramental life of the Church. The teacher and the preacher should plan a coordinated presentation in which the message of the teacher is concerned with the Church of Christ and the message of the preacher is concerned with the Christ of the Church.

The physical equipment that is used in the mission should include for each member of the congregation hymnals or hymn sheets and a Book of Common Prayer. When the

teaching concerning the meaning of the altar is introduced, an altar with its furnishings can be constructed progressively to accompany each stage of the teaching. If the congregation has been properly prepared the first night, the Book of Common Prayer can be placed in the hands of each person the second night. For the remainder of the mission it can be used as the "textbook." The plan of instruction should be so carried forward that a service with responses can be used the last two or three services of the mission. The Litany is adaptable for the first effort, and Evening Prayer, with copious explanations and directions, could be used at the second service.

The teachings of the mission can be greatly extended by the liberal use of instruction leaflets, devotional literature, and

prayer cards.

The principal means of learning who in the community may form a group for the continued effort of the Church are through people expressing an interest in private conferences with the clergy and by the use of "interest" cards distributed generally throughout the mission. This card should be made to provide for an expression of interest and a place for the signature of the interested person.

No time should be allowed to elapse between the close of the teaching mission and the establishment of regular services. What the Church proposes to do in the matter of regular services should be announced about the third night before the mission closes, and it should be repeated each night following. The place where the services are to be held should also be

announced.

The length of the teaching mission should not be determined definitely in advance. This should depend upon the response that is received. The mission should be carried on as long as the interest is sharp. If this interest drops suddenly, announcement should be made that the mission will close the

following night. It is preferable, however, to try to foresee how long the interest is likely to be maintained, and announcement then be made of the night on which it will close.

THE CLASS METHOD

The "nucleus of interest," which was mentioned earlier in this chapter, is necessary to the "class method" of rural church extension. It must depend upon a group, however small, to come together with a few neighbors and friends for instruction about the Church.

The "class method" is not thought of as an intense and concentrated effort like the teaching mission. It is planned for a situation where one priest does all the work, and where the group is near enough to enable him to meet with it once each week over a period of several weeks. A year's time in the class stage of establishing a mission must not be regarded as long or laborious. It is a slower method, to be sure, but it is also quite as effective in the long run. It has the advantage of making it possible for a rural priest to extend, single-handed, the work in his own area. It is also more conservative, and may be, thereby, more congenial to the temperament of many priests and lay people.

The method of teaching is the same as that used in the teaching mission. It must be adapted to the small group which, in all probability, will meet in a home. Quite obviously, no attempt should be made to preach a sermon, as the call to personal allegiance to Christ and the meaning of His religion for the individual can be made to suffuse the teaching at all times. As in the teaching mission, the Book of Common

Prayer should be the "textbook."

The following plan of conducting the class has been used successfully. At the opening of the meeting, a prayer asking

God's blessing upon the work of the class is offered. The prayer is followed immediately by the instruction. The class should be informal, and ample time for questions and discussion should be provided. A brief service from the Prayer Book, with two or three hymns, should close the meeting of the class. When the class has made sufficient progress in its knowledge of the Church and her ways, the priest should vest for this service. The class and service should be held within a stated period of time, and the opportunity for the priest and members to "visit" with each other should also be allowed for. Devotional and church instructional literature can also be effectively used as outside reading for the members of the class. This will not require an extensive outlay in money, since three or four books can serve adequately the needs of the class.

Consistent effort should be made to have the class grow. The personal influence motive that is treated in the personal evangelism section of this chapter can be utilized for the purpose of extending the membership of the class.

Where this method can be utilized successfully, the class itself will constitute the foundation for the permament mission of the Church in the community. But in order for it to develop into permanent status, the members of the class must be imbued with missionary zeal and evangelistic enthusiasm for their task.

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CHAPTER VI

THE SOCIAL FUNCTION OF THE RURAL CHURCH

RELIGION AND COMMUNITY SOCIALIZATION

THE Church is not in the community to be served by the community. It must of itself be a potent socializing agency to serve the community. Because of the nature of all social institutions, the Church never stands entirely apart from the life of the community, but it can and often does receive much from the community without making appreciable returns. While the primary obligation of the Church is a spiritual ministry to its members, it has, none the less, a real obligation to serve the whole of their life, and this involves the life of the community. A parish that can conceive of its mission only in the narrow terms of a close corporation will fail in its work of bringing to men the full import of the life and message of our Lord Jesus Christ. The implications of His own ministry are set forth in terms which should be the constant challenge and the clear ideal of every rural church.

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
Because he hath anointed me to preach
the Gospel to the poor;
He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted,
To preach deliverance to the captives,
And recovering of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty them that are bruised,
To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."

In the rural community, as never before, we are under the necessity of redefining our religion. It must be a way of life,

and that cannot be separated from all that touches life. Its fountainhead must be in human needs, and God is to be found in those needs. If we allow the vision of the Christian life to become dimmed to humanity's needs in rural life, religion ceases to function.

The Church in the country town has never had greater opportunities for service than she has today, nor has she ever been confronted with greater perils to her life. The horizons of all people are expanding at a speed never before known to civilization. The social changes affecting the lives of people are not leaving rural people untouched. The developing consciousness of the importance of their basic industry, and its effect upon the economic and social life of the nation, have given them a new sense of social privilege and responsibility. Their realization of a need for the reinforcing social advantages of life has come with suddenness and acuteness. This places an immediate and an urgent demand upon the rural church. The Church must meet this demand by giving to her rural work a new consideration and a complete revaluation. She must prepare herself with all immediacy to meet, in a statesmanlike manner, the social responsibilities that are hers in rural life. The need for broader programs, for a higher type of leadership, and for a moving sense of obligation to all people presses upon her as it inevitably must. She is one of the rural community's few social organizations, and she must answer to the trust that rural peoples have always reposed in her. The time when the Church could indulge her genius for other-worldliness and exclude everything else has definitely passed. She must be a part of the life of the community; she must touch redemptively its whole life, and there only will she find her soul in rural work.

The problems of rural social life can be solved only by an intelligent and intensive program of socialization; a socializa-

tion program which in its processes builds a civilization of culture and high standards of living.

The bases of the socialization process in rural life are stated by Dr. H. B. Hawthorn: *

"Rural people are continually struggling to socialize their personalities and win spiritual happiness. Through book, newspaper, radio, church, and club they seek the impressions that feed their inner being; through song, debate, pageant, and picnic they strive to express their pent-up selves. In the country community this personality process proceeds under certain conditions, some helpful and others disadvantageous. Sociology should be able to factor, organize, and direct this marvelous drama of socialization, staged by such a diversity of human actors. Sociology should interpret life in the country in deeper terms than a contest with droughts, chinch bugs, and mortgages. The community is a socializing mechanism producing and distributing social contacts. We have looked upon the rural community as a producer of corn and hogs, a machine creating dollar values. Much time and energy has been spent-and profitably so-in contriving a machine to get the biggest results with the least expenditure of energy. Yet a community is much more than an area dotted with farmsteads and stores; it has a culture history; it has an organic unity of complex social relationships. It is not merely an arena of plowing, hauling, marketing, selling, and banking; it is a place where talent is marketed, where youth is developing personality through social contacts, and where human destinies are determined. There must be a chance to develop a life as well as to win a livelihood."

The Church is confronted with these great social issues of community life. She must seek the aid of the social sciences if she is to be adequate to their needs. With theology, the social sciences need a place in the study of the rural pastor. There is to be found in them rich inspirations and a vision of the abundant opportunities for Christian service.

The pastor and his congregation are always under the neces-

^{*} The Sociology of Rural Life, pp. 7-8.

sity of remembering that the new test by which people are judging religion is, "What difference does it make in people? Are they better adjusted in their human relationships? Is their sympathy, their tolerance, and their sociability more accentuated and expanded? Has the center of life tended to change away from self and be born anew in a larger life?" A profession of religion must carry along these indubitable implications of religion. Creed cannot be separated from conduct. The "right belief" concept of salvation and the "social concept" of salvation must go hand in hand. One without the other can in no wise be considered religion. One will lose its way in vague and ephemeral cultism, and the other will flounder in the morasses of a purposeless philanthropy. Creed and belief are poorly conceived and badly misinterpreted if the Christian in his relations with his neighbors and in his community does not show that his religion is a power which enables him to meet the actual social demands that are legitimately his as a member of the community.

The social problem of the rural community, again stated in the terminology of Dr. Hawthorn,* is that of social starvation:

"Physical starvation means a lack of nutrition necessary to maintain efficiently the vital organism, and to prevent a gradual wasting away of the physical tissues. Social starvation, likewise, means a deficit of the social contacts necessary to socialize and humanize the personality. Social starvation brings about such abnormal states as egoism, suspicion of neighbor, cynicism, selfishness, criminality and insanity, just as physical starvation may bring about tuberculosis, scurvy, and anæmia."

The question as to the place of the Church in the rural community is not found in the query, "Does the Church have

^{*} The Sociology of Rural Life, p. 39.

responsibilities to the community?" Such a stage of our social thinking has passed long ago. The answer is comprehended more incisively in the question, "What are the Church's responsibilities to the community, and how can she equip herself to assume them?"

INTERCHURCH CO-OPERATION AND COMMUNITY SOCIALIZATION

Individualism, fostered by social isolation, is the root problem of rural social life. The first step in breaking down individualism is a will towards co-operation. This should begin with the religious bodies represented in the community. The membership of the churches constitutes both a cross section and the most powerful social force of the community, and however much they may differ in doctrinal position they can be at one in their recognition of the needs of their community life.

If no pastors' association exists in the community, one should be organized. It should meet at stated times and it should have as its twofold purpose the promotion of fellowship and the planning of community service. As a fellowship, the pastors' association must set for itself the task of discovering and making articulate the social needs of the community. The pastors must lead the way.

Organization makes it possible for people to plan and work together effectively for the improvement of the social conditions of the community, and to this end a council of the churches should be organized. Through the medium of a council the Christian forces of the town can be co-ordinated and brought to bear upon the social needs of the town. The steps to be taken in organizing a council of churches need

not be many or intricate. But at all times the purpose, the projects, and the plans should be very clear. The work to be done varies according to community needs, but the program in all situations should be evolved from a careful study of those needs. A community program is never imposed from without. It must in all cases be a program made for the community by the community.

The whole purpose of the co-operative effort with its community program is to keep the churches from overlooking and overlapping; to keep them from duplicating one another's social work and of neglecting important elements in community life that would otherwise receive little or no attention. It is always the business of the churches to assume the social responsibilities in the community that had theretofore been nobody's business.

THE COMMUNITY PROGRAM

A socialization program for a rural community must be adapted to the community situation. There is, quite obviously, a wide variation in types of communities. Certain type standards are here noted. The population of the community and its economic basis are always fundamental, and from these two elements all other classification proceeds. It may be a community of a single or a mixed racial composition. It can also be classified as to whether it is static, with a low rate of change, or dynamic, with a high rate of change. The organizations in the community, such as the churches, lodges, schools, farm-bureau, or commercial club are elements that affect its types. There is a further classification that can be made on the basis of the community co-operation that is manifested by organizations—whether they lead a separate existence or co-operate in the whole enterprise of the community.

THE COMMUNITY SURVEY

A community socialization program has its foundation in a social survey of the rural area. The program will not be fitted to community needs, nor the survey be of much value unless the persons in charge of it have a definite purpose in view. After the facts have been secured, a definite plan of work, based on the survey, must be established. The program, with the data of the survey supporting it, is then used to educate the people as to what ought to be done in the community.

A suggested procedure in making a social survey is indicated as follows:

1. The establishing of community boundaries and the family census.

The social boundaries of a community should be determined by the natural center where people go to church and school, and for trade, medical service, and amusements. It should then go out from this center to take in the farthest family that looks to the community as its center of social and trade life. Every family within the area should be visited, and the social interests and activities, and, as far as possible, the economic status of each member carefully and fully tabulated.

2. Organizations.

A study should be made of all organizations within the community. The purposes and the programs of the organizations are necessary to a comprehensive idea of the social picture of the whole community. A list of members of each organization should be secured with a view to checking and comparing with the information that is contained in the family census.

3. Charting and mapping.

The information gathered in these preliminary steps should be arranged in chart and map form. Charts and maps should be made the chief source material for community education. They lend themselves admirably to concise and graphic presentation of the matter that is to be considered. Among the charts and maps there should be a Socialization Map. This map should list all the organizations and the effects of their work on community socialization; how many opportunities of social contacts they provide for their members, and what part of an essential community program each is carrying out. Public school and Church school charts and maps should be prepared in order to show the same information. Studies should also be made of the economic and business status of the area, of population analyses, and a historical survey. While this last group of studies is usually highly specialized and requires the services of a technically trained person, they may be restricted, for the purposes of initiating a social program, to the factors that bear upon setting the program in motion. As the community reaches a higher degree of social awareness through the progress of the program, a scientific and a thorough survey of the economic, ethnic, and historical elements in its life should be made.

The chief value of the survey is that of making known to the people of the community the social facts and social needs of their community. It must be made so that it will tell about the homes of the area that are socially isolated and what parts of its life are being neglected. It should also cause questions to arise as to why certain people use the trade facilities of the community, but do not use its churches, schools, library, or community organizations. These observations and queries should lead to a real social examination as to how the social life of the community is being affected by the inimical fac-

tors which appear. From these inquiries an investigation of the condition and adequacy of the community's social machinery will naturally result.

The results of the survey will be negligible unless they are so clear that they will break through the mass of data that has been collected. The survey must be brought down to a simple evaluation of the social assets and liabilities of the community. These questions should be often asked: "What assets in terms of social resources does the community possess?" and "What are its life and community-destroying liabilities?" The answers will be found in the regenerating social forces of the community, working on a socially conscious and community-adopted social plan.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The trends in community organization have forced rural leaders to make drastic changes in their methods of approach to the problem of community socialization. The fundamental changes that have taken place in community life have made it impossible to hold people to restricted social groupings such as were possible before the great advances in communication and transportation. The group consciousness that characterized the rural community twenty-five years ago rarely obtains today. Rural people are more free and have wider choices in making their associations on the basis of special interests.

The factors that have brought about these changes and made them variable for different communities are improved roads, automobiles, and density of population. The tendency for neighborhood lines and trade relations to break *increases* with progress made in improved roads, a rising per capita ownership of automobiles, and an increasing population per area. Communities which are near great population centers,

with their good roads and automobiles, naturally show a greater tendency to break neighborhood and trade lines, while those farther removed from cities have a greater tendency to find their group interests in the community.

These divisive factors in community life, however, have not obliterated group interests; they have simply changed the emphasis. In former times the community had to be more self-contained; it is now self-contained from choice. Group relations and organizations are now tending to form around special interests rather than upon a locality plan. Instead of the groups being involuntary because of isolation, they are becoming more voluntary, and are usually created by special promotion.

Because of the nature of special interest groups in a community, there arises the problems of overlapping and conflicting loyalties. The effects of these factors upon the social life of the community must be determined. Elizabeth Herring, of the National Board of the Young Women's Christian Association, writes of the very small community as follows:*

"The crux of the problem of the functions of rural organizations seems to lie in this fact that organizations which exist to promote single special interests, whether they be political education, or parent education, or anything else, can rarely expect to take root in a country community unless they come to rest upon some social grouping that has more to bind it together than interest in a subject. There are not enough people in a village to supply likeminded members for special interest groups. Also the gathering of a group around a special interest tends to disturb the cultural and leadership pattern in the community, arousing sensitiveness and criticism."

The community must come to an understanding of what is involved in the various interests and movements within its

^{*} Rural America, December, 1933, pp. 6-7.

life. The community itself is more comprehensive and important than any of them, and their policies must be directed and controlled in the interests of the life of the whole community.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Adult Education

A community social program has its roots and its enduring life in adult education. If the understanding of the whole socialization effort is to be established and maintained, it must precede the formal program in the pastors' association. In the Council of Churches it must develop intensively as the program develops, and it must be made concrete if it is to come to its greatest extensiveness with the people of the community.

The emphasis in adult education in the rural community must be on its social implications. Formal education, in its effort to impart techniques to enable people to earn a living, has neglected the social side of personality development. As a result, men and women, after receiving college training, return to community life with only a superficial knowledge of the society in which they are to live. The process of education must always be the process of adjustment, and, while the training of the citizen should anticipate his need for making a living, it should also equip him to live with other human beings.

Many rural communities are strikingly deficient in opportunities for adult education. Excepting the activities of literary and music clubs, very little is offered the adult population of a community. A trend towards improvement of the social life in the country town has been noted, yet much of it remains dull and prosaic, and sometimes tawdry. It easily be-

comes the prey of the evil spirits of bigotry, intolerance, class hatred, factionalism, and racial friction. It is starved for the things which literature, drama, music, and art can give it. These are the reinforcing things of the good life, and the life of rural people must continue to stagnate until the awakened sense of the need for adult education reaches the leaders in the community. The totality of its aim must be that of the Danish Folk School—an effort to close "the yawning abyss between life and enlightenment," and "what the enemy has taken from us by force from without, we must regain by education from within."

The different elements that may go into an adult education program in a community are many, but they must be fitted to the social and cultural needs of the people. Educators everywhere are testing educational results in terms of character. And for this reason the influences and situations which condition character growth are being sought. Questions are being raised insistently as to how educational forces may be of positive aid in creating the highest type of socialized character.

The problems of economic and social injustices, of crime and antisocial behavior are compelling us to study the causes, the treatment, and the social and economic changes that must be understood before intelligent measures can be carried through to a sound solution of them. All these problems of modern social change have reached rural people, and all are touching their lives as acutely as they touch the lives of city people. But the leadership that will open the way for rural people to study and to help in their solution has not been adequate to the need.

There are many adult education agencies at work in rural America, and while they are inadequate in scope, they are far-reaching in organization. The most notable and the most nearly nation-wide of these agencies is the extension service in agriculture and home economics maintained as a joint enterprise of the United States Department of Agriculture and the land-grant colleges, generally with the county governments and local agencies co-operating.

The university extension movement has grown in importance. In 1930 the Federal Office of Education reported 443 institutions of higher learning which were maintaining some form of extension teaching for the rural adult population.

These agencies make it unnecessary for the program to stand alone in the community. It should be associated with these agencies and also those that exist in the state, county, and community.

The Library

There is no element in a rural community socialization plan that is of greater importance than its library. If the community does not have a library, it should take immediate steps to secure one. Its function in the community is too important to be overlooked.

A national interest in library service has increased very rapidly in the last two decades. Many counties are providing a central library for the entire county. It is generally located at the seat of the county government and library substations are set up in all the smaller communities and farm centers. Deliveries of fresh supplies of books are made to the substations at regular intervals.

Another evidence of library interest is manifested in the sense of social responsibility the libraries in large cities feel for their outlying rural territory. This may be described as a mobile library service. Trucks loaded with books are sent out on regular schedule and the people in the small com-

munities and in the farm homes meet the truck and secure a

new supply of books.

Antedating both the foregoing services are the loan libraries of state and university extension service. The method employed is that of sending to a person, who assumes the responsibility of librarian, a box of books for the use of the people of the community. When the books have served their purpose they are replaced by another box containing an entirely new selection of books. This service also supplies groups and study clubs with books and articles which have particular

bearing upon their study program.

Libraries must come from the need that is felt in the life of the community. They must grow, but in their inception they must come from the educative processes that are undergoing development in the life of the community. Many rural communities have libraries, but sometimes they are not worthy of the name. They are filling no place in the life of the people because the people have never been educated to desire the things the library can give them. Reading tastes have not been developed, and reading interests have not been inquired into. For the library to become a strong educational force in the community, it must have the support and interest of the people. In the social survey of the community, the reading needs and habits of the people should be determined, and the library established on these bases.

An effective promotional procedure in organizing or building up library service for a community must be undertaken before the library can become a reality. A good chairman of a community library committee is a prime requisite. He should be a person who has many contacts, who talks well, and has intelligent enthusiasm for the project. A publicity committee should be appointed, and through its work the plan should constantly be kept before the people. All organizations in the community should be reached, and their interest as a group should be enlisted. The purpose behind these initial efforts should always be kept clear. They must be made to work towards creating a substantial library interest along with the community machinery that will be necessary to maintain it.

In cities the library is the principal educational center of the majority of adults, but library facilities in rural areas are so meager that rural people are suffering under grave handicaps. Many state universities and colleges are giving substantial help in establishing rural community libraries, and the American Library Association is lending every encouragement to the library movement in rural areas.

According to the investigations of the American Library Association, eighty-two per cent of rural people in the United States are without library service, whereas six per cent of the city population are without libraries. The same authority states that 1,136 counties in the United States have no public libraries. These are largely rural counties.

The Arts in the Community

Art movements in the United States are beginning to find expression in rural communities. In this trend there is a positive ministry for rural people. It provides for them those opportunities for release and stimulation which are to be found in the expression of emotional experiences in music, rhythm, form, and color.

If there is a drab monotony about life in a rural community, the surest means of overcoming it is the liberal and well-guided use of all forms of art expression. Gutzon Borglum has said: "The task of the artist is to reach down into the lives of people and lift up their souls where they can see them."

Beauty and appreciation are avenues along which the soul moves towards a developing apprehension of itself. If this is true for the individual, it is also true for the community, because an appreciation of art is essential to cultural growth. It is the soil from which the artist often springs. It supplies the avocations that rural people need as a means to growth in personality and to the socialization of their life.

The measure of excellence of an artistic achievement in the community is usually the judgment placed upon the performance of an outstanding individual, or some outstanding group performance. It should be remembered that at best these can be only occasional high points, and that they may in time cease to represent the actual community. Art expressions of drama, music, and the pictorial and decorative arts are often more potent in their socializing influences when they are used in the recurring and less spectacular processes of an integrated cultural program for the community.

Drama

The little theater movement has had far-reaching influence, but except for notable achievements in a few states it has not been general as a medium of artistic expression in rural areas.

The development of the rural little theater had its inception in the work of Professors Koch and Arvold in North Dakota. The object of the little country theater is described by Professor Arvold as that of "producing such plays and community programs as can be easily staged in a church basement, in a country school, in the sitting room of a farmhouse, in the village or town halls, or any place where people assemble for social betterment. Its principal function is to stimulate an interest for good clean drama and original entertainment among the people living in the open country and village, in

order to help them find themselves that they may become better satisfied with the community in which they live."*

There are many interesting activities connected with a little theater besides those of "acting in a play." There are the plays to be read and selected, the stage sets to be designed and constructed, stage lighting to be studied and executed, costuming to be planned, and furniture and properties to be gathered. Every play demands at least that these elements go into its production, and each of them calls for members of the community to contribute their talents and interest to the enterprise as a whole.

Home talent tournaments for rural communities are being promoted by the Extension Services of the College of Agriculture of the University of Wisconsin. The program for the state has been under the direction of Professors Wileden, Kolb, and Lindstrom. These leaders state that the movement has

the following main purposes:

"The first to provide a wholesome and worth-while recreation and leisure-time activity free from commercialism. The second, to provide opportunity for individual self-expression and originality. A third, to develop appreciation of the arts. The fourth, to learn to work together in group enterprises."

The tournament may be made to consist of contests in drama, music, athletics, and novelty features, and it can be staged by a single community or by several communities.

Religious drama offers an opportunity to develop a religious expression. There has been so much that is incomplete and impromptu in religious drama that it has had difficulty in taking its place as a serious form of the drama. Its dignity of theme should demand dignity and carefulness of treatment. Plays should be selected with regard to their religious content,

^{*} The Soul of the Soil, p. 3.

their merit as to educational value and literary quality, and their dramatic technique. It is well to have plays and pageants for the children of the Church school, but the effort in the community should not end there. Some excellent religious plays exist and they should be considered among those adapted to community theater production.

The national headquarters of most churches have facilities for assisting groups with their religious drama problems. In 1924 the Federal Council of Churches published two volumes

of excellent religious drama.*

The greatest problem with which the theater in the rural community must contend is that of securing a competent director. While a technically trained director may not be available, it is possible that the need itself will call out the person whose gifts and interests are deep enough to make him qualify for leadership.

Standards of artistic excellence should never be lost to sight. There is so much that is discouragingly poor about community dramatic effort that it has deterred even the strong-hearted from conceding the drama a place in the life of a small community. It should be a real part of the educational program of the community, and as such it should have all the seriousness of approach, fair treatment, and training due any of its enterprises. Its socializing values cannot be overestimated, because it not only relates the arts most readily and simply, but also relates the participants, actors and audience alike to splendid themes that are worthy of the effort.

^{*} Religious Drama. Committee on Religious Drama, Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America. 2 vols., 1924. \$2.00.

Music

Music can be made to have great value as a socializing agency in the community. It has been circumscribed in most communities, however, by being confined to a small special interest group whose members have had musical training, or who have developed musical interests. But music can be made widely inclusive. It is estimated that books and lectures appeal only to an upper ten per cent of the critically intellectual, while music appeals to ninety per cent of all people. People also seem to be more willing to express themselves musically in group activity than in any other mode of public expression.

Great strides in musical appreciation have been made through public school music and the radio, and, as a result, it is confidently expected that the next generation in the rural community will show a keener interest in music as a mode of artistic expression. The immediate problem, however, is one of using music as a socializing factor in the life of the community.

The bases of community music are in most cases already laid in the choirs of the churches and the music clubs. From these can be developed a united effort for the production of cantatas, recitals, and light operas. The resources in these types of music are very broad, and, regardless of the degree of musical proficiency of the group, a vehicle of artistic merit can always be found.

An enthusiastic music lover and the phonograph form a couple that can be made to contribute in a most helpful manner to a heightened musical appreciation in the community. The philosophy in music, its form, and the media through which it works constitute a *terra incognita* to the musical

interests of most people. There are the great music dramas of Wagner, the Italian opera form, and the rationale of the great symphonies that open up as a field of cultural interest. Each community has music lovers who would welcome the opportunity to share their interest with others, and the means should be provided for them to do so. Classes in musical appreciation may become a part of the adult education program. There is a large bibliography available, and out of it a leader may gather his lecture material. He can also make liberal use of phonograph records as illustrative material and for entertainment.

The National Recreation Association has a number of pamphlets which provide information on organizing and conducting community music programs.

Pictures and the Decorative Arts

Appreciation of art is generally regarded as unrelated to the life of workaday people. This misconception is due very largely to the artists themselves. They have seemed to work in the rarefied atmosphere of genius, and the impression is created that there is an esoteric occultism about their productions that makes it difficult for the uninitiated to understand. Perhaps this false idea is fostered only by the pseudo artist, but it has been of sufficient force to "scare people away."

Another barrier to art appreciation is that we are accustomed to think about pictures chiefly in terms of the instinctive, and not enough in terms of the educative. Taste, interest, liking, desire, and satisfaction are the instinctive factors upon which our appreciations begin and too often end. But we should recognize that we are always changing our appreciations in some measure, and these changes are generally effected through conscious or unconscious educative processes. Edu-

cated appreciations lead us into more conscious valuations, a sense of worth, and a reference to standards.

A love and a critical appreciation of pictures can be made to satisfy the cultural hunger of many of our rural people; many more than we sometimes imagine. In a certain measure, everyone has the basis of appreciation for art. We need often to recall that art moves in the realms of harmony, beauty, symmetry, and grandeur, and that all these are native to us. And also the creative element in art is the same instinctive creativeness that is common to us all.

The group that is interested in art appreciation can be inspired to perform a greatly needed cultural function in the life of the whole community. The community can be made art conscious through meetings which are opened to the public and designed especially for it. These meetings can take the form of an exhibit of the copies of great works of art with lectures on appreciation. Frequently, the art museums of a near-by city can be persuaded to help the rural community art group by lending for an exhibit some of its pictures of current art. The group also has a special mission to encourage local artists and indigenous art. The work of the group should lead inevitably to getting art into the homes. This applies not simply to encouraging better pictures for the walls of the home but also to the decoration of the home both inside and out.

The resources available to a community adult education program in the sphere of art are many and varied, but perhaps none of them has progressed so far and is so complete in its service to the rural community as the Department of Surveys and Exhibits of the Russell Sage Foundation.

Social Education

Reference has been made to social education as it pertains to an understanding of the general social and economic trends that affect the lives of people. It is the purpose at this point to call attention to three factors in social education which have a specific bearing upon the social life of the community. They are family relations, preparation for marriage, and mental hygiene.

The influence of the home in the rural community is greater than it is in the city. It is a more constant factor in the lives of rural people because it affords a more stable environment for family life. We are aware of what the vast social changes of recent times have done to family life in the city, but we are not alive enough to the fact that the integrity of the family in rural areas is now being threatened by these same forces that have all but destroyed it in the cities.

The principal forces can be listed as the weakening of the sanctions of religion in the home, the increase of divorce as a symptom of family disorganization, and the influence on family life of sickness and loss of income. Behind these are to be found all the psychological factors that make for maladjustments, tensions, and breaks in family life. These should have a large place in a community educational program.

Our people enter into the most serious relationship in life badly prepared for its spiritual, biological, and economic implications. In Canon 41, the Church requires the clergy to "give instruction both publicly and privately on the nature of Holy Matrimony, its responsibilities, and the mutual love and forbearance it requires." But in our social responsibilities to the rural community we must conceive of our work as going beyond "those of our own household." We have the social vision and training in the matter of marriage relationships

that should impel us to try to make the standards of the Church the standards of the community. The plan for organizing family relations institutes that has been fostered by the Department of Christian Social Service of the National Council can, with some adaptations, be made to serve institutes of like nature in the community.

Mental hygiene is a comparatively new science. Its discoveries and progress in the last twenty-five years have put increasingly into the hands of people the technique for securing to themselves adjustments to their social environment and the development of their personalities. The mental health factors in a program of community adult education should perhaps include the instructions on family relations, and preparation for marriage, but they have been set apart for the purpose of indicating and emphasizing their importance. It is suggested that mental health be made to include child health and hygiene, mental hygiene, and child guidance, sex hygiene and the psychology of the child and the adolescent.

The national organizations which make their services available to community programs are the National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc., The American Child Health Association, the Country Life Department of the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Association, and the Children's Bureau of the United States Department of Labor.

COMMUNITY WELFARE

We turn now from the educational factors in a program of community socialization to those of community welfare. Social welfare problems in the rural community do not differ widely in kind from those of the city, but, as the ethos of the rural community is so different from that of the city, they frequently require a different approach and treatment.

The problems common to both city and country are poor relief, care of the sick poor, the handicapped and mentally deficient, the indigent transient, housing, and racial attitudes. The only new one the rural community adds is that of the tenant-farmer population which may be in its area, and for which it must make itself socially responsible.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that social welfare problems should never be separated from the educational program of the community. Welfare is never the sole responsibility of the few interested and sympathetic souls, but through a program of social education it must become increasingly the intimate concern of the whole community. Put in its lowest possible terms, the welfare work of the community must have financial support, and this can come only as the community is educated to a realization of the need.

Social Case Work and the Case Worker

The difficulty of securing a technically trained social case worker in a rural community is oftentimes insurmountable. A number of states, however, have already seen the importance of supplying qualified case workers for their rural areas, and in the body of their social welfare laws they have greatly facilitated the rural county in its effort to secure a worker. In a few notable instances the provision for a worker is made mandatory upon the counties.

If a state, in co-operation with the county, does not provide for qualified case workers, time should not be wasted in waiting on a laggard legislature to recognize the need. It devolves upon the socially enlightened community to choose and train its own case workers. Community progress demands that its social problems be faced in as intelligent and speedy a manner as possible. Doing nothing about its problems not only will never solve them, but will have the direct

effect of aggravating them.

The volunteer and home-trained case worker does not by any means fulfill the ideal of training that the community needs and deserves, but it is the best that many communities can do in the circumstances in which they are placed. The primary requirements for any case worker, and they are especially demanded in rural work, are that she shall be interested in people, have a love for them, and be a tactful and friendly person. With respect to her training she should be willing to study the sociology of rural life in order that she may gain a scientific knowledge of the special problems which affect the lives of rural people. There are also many excellent treatises on the technique of social case work which can be utilized in helping to make up for the deficiency in formal training and directed case work experience. The worker should likewise avail herself of every opportunity for short courses and conferences.

The social work agencies in near-by cities are usually helpful and co-operative. They recognize that many of its rural community's welfare problems have their origin in their own city, and they are glad to be of service in a solution of them in rural areas.

Many cities now have psychiatric and child guidance clinics which can be utilized by the rural community. The problems of the unadjusted and the mentally handicapped in rural areas do not differ greatly in proportion from those of the cities. But in the more intimate relations of the smaller population groups they come to notice more acutely. The small town "problem child" and "queer person" are distinctly injurious, not only to the unadjusted and mentally handicapped themselves, but also to the social well-being of the community. They should never be taken for granted in the community.

Treatment can be secured for them, and it is their right to receive it, as much as it is the right of the physically ill to receive medical treatment.

The "clearing of cases" is of great importance in community welfare work. The fact that the town is small and "everybody knows what is going on in the community" does not remove the need of ascertaining what the churches, organizations, and individuals have been doing for a client. All overlapping and duplication should be avoided. It is as poor economy in case work as in anything else. The new family which moves into a community and immediately becomes a relief problem and the indigent transient are the types of cases that most frequently call for clearance. This clearing should be done with the community from which they came. A small amount spent in telegrams and postage will often save the community's social welfare treasury from being victimized by professional panhandlers.

The case worker and the people who are directly responsible for promoting the welfare work in the community should inform themselves on "where to turn" in the county and state for all the services, agencies, and institutions that are available to them for the better handling of their own work.

Health

The rural town is generally thought of as the ideal place to live because of the lack of great crowds and the open air conditions of living. If these were the only factors in physical welfare, rural health conditions would be ideal, but unfortunately the health of most rural communities must contend with no standard, or at best sub-standard, tests in its water, milk, and food supply. Food handlers' examinations and quarantine regulations are either lax or nonexistent.

In comparison with cities, in health facilities the rural community is distinctly underprivileged, and the Church, for this reason alone, has a special obligation to be of service in a community health program. The Council of Churches will contain a group that is essentially charged with promoting the health interests of the community. It will formulate modern health standards which are adapted to the community; try to awaken public interest in an effort to secure better facilities, and publicize and promote its program through the co-operation of the churches. In the cities the health of people is being increasingly cared for by clinics, hospitals, trained health service, trained nurses, and private physicians. In the rural community most of these services are lacking and sometimes none of them is available to the people. The health facilities of the community must be studied, and where inadequacies appear the council will take steps to remedy them. The health of its people should always be a first charge upon the community's social consciousness, but the community will not realize its obligation until some group is made definitely responsible for educating it to its inadequacies and responsibilities.

Self-medication with proprietary remedies is much more extensive in rural areas than many people imagine. There is great need for a health program which will enable rural people to secure a medical service that will obviate the need of people doing their own doctoring in a hit-or-miss method.

The public health officer, if he is to make his work effective, must have the force of public opinion behind him. Too often his duties are allowed to become merely nominal and routine. The most community-health-minded physician should be appointed to the office, and he should be encouraged in a strict enforcement of sanitary regulations. He should also be looked to as the mentor in community health educa-

tion. The rural community must place great store by its qualified leaders, and none more than its health officer. He is a professional man, technically equipped to render a vital service to the community, and no individual can make a more distinctive and valuable contribution to its life.

The most recent constructive effort in dealing with the community health problem is the provision most of the states have made for public health nurses. The nurses' duties generally center in health education in the schools, in care of the sick, the aged, the afflicted, the expectant mother.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the betterment of the health of a community depends upon educational processes. The public schools should be made the primary agents of promotion, and even though the schools are basic the effort should never end with them. The need for general enlightenment is essential. Health and sanitation teaching in schools is not likely to carry much conviction if the children do not see in operation in the community the principles they have been taught.

The United States Public Health Service offers many facilities for organizing and promoting rural health work. Its pamphlets, which cover a wide range of health education subjects, can become invaluable aids in the community health program.

Recreation

Recreation has an important rôle to play in a community socialization program. It is more and more to recognize increasingly that the values of recreation and play are not confined to the physical development of the individual. The mental, social, and moral aspects of it are of just as great importance. These values, however, must have special emphasis in a community program. This is made necessary by the

fact that rural attitudes are often adverse to recreation. Because play is frequently thought of as a meaningless "squandering of time," the opportunity to create the mental, social, and moral forces of community life through recreation oftentimes must be fought for.

The mental hygiene values of recreation are found in the stimuli that come from outside the work routine. The dulling effect of routine should have the counterbalancing elements in recreation to give alertness of mind, initiative, skill, and a sense of self-reliance.

Recreation's social values are especially needed. It is in the country town that we find the greatest lack in social experience. Any force that can be used to break down social isolation and develop community interest and co-operative technique must have its place in the community.

And, finally, the moral values of recreation must be utilized in the community to develop in the individual the social virtues of self-control, recognition of the rights of others, altruism, and team play.

The churches sometimes encourage recreation for their own organizations and the schools occasionally have a directed and planned recreation program, but too often the efforts end here. The need is a program in which all the members of a community can find some expression in recreation. The plan should call for provision and facilities for recreation on a community scale. Tournaments, contests, and field days should be promoted with the clear-cut view of affording social objectives for recreation and play for the whole community.

The principles upon which a recreation program should be based are:

- 1. That play is as necessary for people as work.
- 2. That the rural community should be made as attractive socially as the city.

3. That recreation is not simply for the people, but that it must also be of and by them.

The national organizations for boys and girls are giving special attention to the youth recreation problem, and the United States Bureau of Education has excellent bulletins which give information and suggestions on the means and methods of providing recreation for the rural community. The National Recreation Association provides specialized services for the rural community. Its handbook * on rural recreation is a valuable adjunct to any recreation program.

The Parish House and Community Service

The rural parish that is fortunate enough to have a parish house or guild hall is in an advantageous position to be of service to the adult education and welfare program of the community. A parish with an unpretentious guild hall in a rural community is oftentimes more greatly blessed with opportunities for serving the community than is a city parish with a commodious and well-equipped parish house. The possibilities of the parish house in community service are well stated in a recent bulletin† of the Department of Christian Social Service of the National Council:

"The social function of the parish house is but scantily understood. The philosophy of the building has seldom been thought through; its social purposes have not been appraised. Yet no parish house, regardless of size or equipment, can be adequately used unless there is a fairly clear appreciation of its social function. Quite often the parish house is the scene of frequent activities never integrated into any creative program.

^{*} Rural and Small Community Recreation.

[†] The Parish House and the New Leisure, National Council, 1934.

"... Each parish is set in the midst of a particular community. It is there not merely to save its own members spiritually, but to serve that community socially. The parish house is the means through which the parish proves good neighbor to its community. With vision and ingenuity it may become a strong character-building and morale-sustaining 'service station' for a large area.

"... Furthermore, the Church's concern is not with mere adult education, but with Christian adult education. In each problem arising in lecture or discussion group the question must be asked: 'What has Christianity to say about this problem?' The community center inevitably faces social problems with a secular approach; it avoids the religious sanction. With equal inevitability the parish house, facing the same problem, utilizes a Christian approach.

"It should be remembered, of course, that any adult education offered in the parish house will be subject to the same two tests applied to it elsewhere: Is it attractive? Is it recre-

ative?"

A LIST OF AGENCIES WHOSE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES

American Child Health Association, 50 West 50th Street, New York, N. Y.

American Library Association, 520 North Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Ill.

Children's Bureau, United States Department of Labor, Wash-

ington, D. C.

Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America, 105 East 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

National Committee for Mental Hygiene, Inc., 50 West 50th

Street, New York, N. Y.

National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Association, Country Life Department, 1201—16th Street, Washington, D. C. National Recreation Association, 315 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y.

Russell Sage Foundation, Department of Surveys and Exhibits,

130 East 22nd Street, New York, N. Y.

United States Bureau of Education, Rural Education Division, Washington, D. C.

United States Public Health Service, Washington, D. C.

University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin.

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Rural Organizations Handbook, by J. H. Kolb and A. F. Wileden. University of Wisconsin Experiment Station, Madison, 1926. 15c.

Rural Adult Education, by B. Y. Landis and J. D. Willard. The

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The Agricultural Extension System of the United States, by Clarence B. Smith and Meredith C. Wilson. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York, 1930. \$3.50.

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ciation. The Century Co., New York, 1926. \$2.00.

The Little Country Theatre, by Alfred G. Arvold. The Macmillan Co., New York, 1912. \$2.50.

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tion, New York, 1926. \$1.50.

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Building Family Foundations, by Harold Holt. Morehouse Pub-

lishing Co., Milwaukee, Wis., 1930. \$1.00.

Rural Health, by Ralph A. Felton and Nina U. Short. New York

College of Agriculture, Ithaca, N. Y., 1929. Free.

The County Unit of Yesterday and Today (Health), by Fred T. Foard. Reprint 1472, U. S. Public Health Service, Washington, D. C., 1931. Free.

Community Recreation, by James C. Elson. The Century Co.,

New York, 1929. \$2.25.

Rural and Small Community Recreation. National Recreation As-

sociation, New York, 1929. 75c.

A Bibliography of Rural Recreation. National Recreation Association, New York, 1929. 5c.

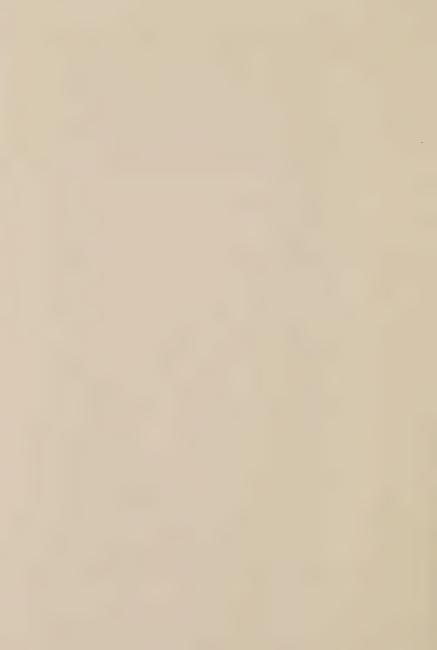
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CHAPTER VII

TOWARD A DIOCESAN POLICY FOR RURAL WORK

THE CHURCH'S NEED OF RURAL PEOPLE

As incongruous as it may seem, the first essential of a proposed policy for diocesan rural work is for the Church to have the unqualified conviction that she has a real place in the religious life of rural America. If she is to approach her task with anything like the aggressiveness demanded by the new conditions and the new exigencies that prevail in rural areas, her conviction must be compelling. Timidity and half-heartedness have characterized so much previous effort that it practically indicts the Church of not believing in her mission.

Is the Church adapted to rural work? The best answer to this question is found in the deductions that may be drawn from studies of rural churches made by the Institute of Social and Religious Research in 1922. This organization undertook to make first-hand investigation of the forty most successful town and country churches of the evangelical type in the United States. The work was supervised by Dr. Edmund deS. Brunner. The results of the survey were published in two volumes.* From a study of these churches, it is clear that certain basic principles operative in them were the chief factors disposed to make them "successful." It should be explained parenthetically that these principles did not enter into

^{*} Churches of Distinction in Town and Country. Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches.

a definition of "success" in Dr. Brunner's books. He stated that "no attempt was made to arrive inductively at a scientific definition of what constitutes a 'successful' church. The test of a church's 'success' most generally accepted by denominational boards . . . is the service, spiritual and material, which it renders to the community of which it is a part, and the measure of support which in turn it receives from the community. This test was accepted as the basis of the present investigation." *

These factors which have made for success are not only strongly represented in the Episcopal Church, but they long have been a part of her tradition. Theoretically they represent at least a fundamental expression of her continuing life.

An analysis† of churches surveyed in the two books mentioned reveal the following factors of their success:

- 1. An educated ministry.
- 2. The principle of a settled pastorate.
- 3. A reverent, dignified, and formal service of worship.
- 4. A well-developed program of religious education.
- 5. A non-restrictive attitude towards recreation and social life.
- 6. Uniting the æsthetic and the religious to minister in terms of beauty.
 - 7. Unselfish interest in the life of the community.

The testimony of the Church's successful rural parishes is pertinent at this juncture. It can be stated explicitly that wherever the Church has faced her task by supplying to rural parishes consecrated priests, whose equipment of heart and mind is consonant with rural needs, the parishes have succeeded. If this testimony was taken from isolated instances,

^{*} Tested Methods in Town and Country Churches, p. VII.

[†] This analysis was made by the Rev. James R. Colby of Geneva, Ohio.

it could not be stated as a general rule, but the scope of its successful work is nation-wide. It includes every phase of rural life and every type of rural people. While every diocese in the length and breadth of the Church can point to some particular rural parish which is notably successful, the shortcoming of the Church lies in the fact that successful parishes are the exceptions rather than the rule in the dioceses.

The heritage of the Church is rich, and she has much to give in abundant service to the needs of present-day rural life. We never debate whether the Church has a mission to rural England, or even to rural Canada, and it would seem, therefore, to be a palpable begging of the question to allow for doubts to arise concerning its mission to rural America.

If it is true, as is so often charged, that religion in rural areas has deteriorated, the Episcopal Church must regard herself in large part as responsible. Deterioration comes as a result of lack of leadership, a lack of ideals, and of the removal of dominant influences. If the religious life of rural people has been left as prey to the roving evangelist with his irrational cultism, then the Episcopal Church must accept some of the responsibility for this condition. She cannot consider herself as making a contribution to the whole of American life when she neglects so great a part of it. The action and interaction of one area upon another, so characteristic of our Western civilization, has developed a situation in which the influences operating in one are quickly reflected in the other. They combine to make American life what it is, and, if the Church is notably absent in any one segment of national social life, she is only partially represented in American religious thought.

The position the Church occupies in comparison with other religious bodies in urban and rural membership demonstrates very clearly that she must come to grips with her rural problem. It has already been stated that she ranks the highest of the larger religious bodies in the proportion of her city membership, and that she ranks the lowest in the proportion of her rural membership. Such a position becomes ominous and wholly untenable when we consider that the source of population in the United States is still in the rural areas. The birth rate in rural areas, although it declined in the last decennial census, is still greater than it is in the city. As a graphic representation of the number of children under fifteen years of age in rural as compared with urban areas, it is estimated that a population of thirty-five million in rural areas will contain approximately four million more children than the same population in urban areas. The Secretary of Agriculture made the statement * that "only four or five of the cities with a population of 100,000 or above have enough children to maintain permanently a stationary population without accessions from the outside. Most cities have only about three-fourths of the number of children necessary to do so. With immigration practically stopped, our cities, both small and large, depend for their increase mainly on the natural rate of increase of the rural population. Birth rates are declining on the farms as well as in the cities, though not so rapidly. It therefore seems probable that preventing the nation's population from actually declining may be found to depend on the development of policies that will admit of a large proportion of the population dwelling in a rural environment, even though partly or wholly dependent on non-agricultural employment."

We have known for a long time that social phenomena do not "just happen." There are always determinable causes. The Church should always be ready to use the information available through social research.

^{*} Year Book of Agriculture, 1932, p. 37.

Slow-moving and heterogeneous groups like the Church have never really approached from the scientific angle the problems and opportunities involved in social change. Twenty-five years ago very little thought was given to the effects of social change on social institutions. Change was always comparatively so slow and gradual that institutions thought they were absorbing the shock of change without suffering any particular upset of organization or method. And yet, immediately antedating twenty-five years ago, a social change was going on which affected the Episcopal Church very profoundly. A drift of population to the cities and the consequent depletion of rural population had set in. To the casual observer it was almost imperceptible, but it was definite in its direction.

If the numerical strength of religious bodies in the chief agricultural states is examined, it will be found that the leading rural and urban groups today are the ones that were working aggressively in rural areas in the years between 1870 and 1910. It was in these forty years that the foundations of present-day rural religious organization were laid. It was in this era of city growth that the Episcopal Church began thinking of herself as essentially a city Church. The Church did well in following her people into the cities. The counsel of efficiency always dictates that the Church follow her people. But she acted with very little foresight when she relaxed her hold on those remaining in the country.

RURAL PEOPLE'S NEED OF THE CHURCH

The need of the Church to be efficient, by utilizing a scientific approach to the problems and opportunities created by social change, is glaringly apparent today. Changes are not gradual any more; they are sudden, swift, and sometimes

tragic. A population shift, the like of which America has never seen before, has been going on since the beginning of the economic crisis. Many thousands of people, the vast majority of them with very little information and practically no experience and guidance in rural life and industry, have been leaving the cities for the farm and small town. What of the future? The problem of the future can be worked out successfully by a politically intelligent state and a socially awakened Church. Agriculture must approach economic stability by reaching a parity with other industries, and the Church must be brought to apply her social conscience to the needs of rural peoples in order that rural life may be made livable. If these two forces can be brought to bear upon the rural problem, then in thirty or forty years the national population will be more stable socially and more nearly balanced between city and country.

For the Church, the problem of the present population shift is basic. It is also terrifically symptomatic. Out of it come the pressing social questions that are involved in why people are leaving the cities, and what is happening to people in the town and on the farm. We know that something has happened to their economic status, but we are not fully alive to

what is happening to their souls.

The rural community has changed because the people themselves have changed. They have been too much in the confusion of world economic and social stress to be left unaffected. It is decidedly wrong to assume that country people, who have a few acres of land and who are provident in the matter of raising and storing foodstuffs, get along all right. Such an attitude may serve to allay anxiety in the midst of a starvation crisis, but when a people are emerging from the terrible fear that has gripped them they cannot be expected "to live by bread alone." The outreaching of their souls for the things

of the spirit is continually asserting itself. The institutions which had ministered to them in the deeper things of their lives, and which became anæmic or died in the days of stress, are being given renewed prominence in their thinking. Their churches, their schools, their community life, their desire for the undergirding of an economic security which has the promise of permanence, are thought of as things basic in their lives. Their appeal, however incoherent it may be, can be expressed in the old question at Capernaum, "To whom shall we go?" And to whom indeed, but to a Church that is willing to work at the heart of rural life for the heart of rural people.

The Church must strive to express in action a rural social ideal, an ideal which faces the problem of maintaining on the land and in the communities dependent on the land a population which will be sufficient for effective and prosperous production, and, through a highly developed religious and cultural program, provide for it happiness and contentment.

APPRAISAL OF THE COMMUNITY

The community is a knowable social entity. It is not a sheer and attenuated thing, as it was thought to be a few years ago. Progress in social sciences has made it possible to determine the community's needs, its social stability and potentialities, as well as any forces of disintegration that may be present in it.

The rural community generally has stood the impact of social changes in the last thirty years much better than was anticipated. It was expected that the 1930 census would show a heavy decline in both the rural farm and non-farm population. While the farm population declined drastically, the rural non-farm, or the village and town population, not only increased but became a larger proportion of the total population of the United States. The villages and towns under 2,500 population showed a rate of increase that kept pace with the national increase in population. The towns with populations between 2,500 and 6,000 have shown a considerably greater rate of increase. These larger towns now constitute the most stable and promising element in the rural population. The rural town is old enough as a social unit to make it possible to forecast, with fair accuracy, where its present trend is leading it. This may be stated briefly as a definite

trend towards a stabilized population.

The diocese can never adequately appreciate its function and opportunity until it first understands the deeper significance of the communities and areas of which it is composed. A diocesan policy, therefore, should always be determined on the basis of actual facts. A thorough survey of the communities and their areas will supply these facts, and they will leave little doubt as to the present and future status of the community. A survey would make use of the information available from the United States Census Bureau. This information would show not only the population changes for the community, but also the economic changes that have been taking place through several decades. From this data, it is not difficult to chart the factors of stability or disintegration in the community. Provision should also be made for field work. It is possible for this to be done by seminary students or interested lay people working under the supervision of a competent director. The data gathered by field workers would be complementary to that obtained from census materials, and it would also add the necessary information concerning the potentialities, the interest, and the leadership resident in the particular congregation. From the information acquired, the authorities of the diocese would be in a better

position to formulate a definite missionary policy for the diocese. They would be able to determine in what areas work should be prosecuted more aggressively, and also where an expenditure of men and missionary funds may not be warranted.

A sound diocesan missionary policy, therefore, must be based on an appraisal of the rural town and the work the Church has done or plans to do. A policy should take into account the following broad questions:

- 1. Should work be carried forward more aggressively or new work established?
 - 2. Should existing work be abandoned?

Rural towns are of two fundamental types: the growing community with its steady increase in population and the decadent community whose population is static or declining. What we may term the growing community offers a real opportunity for the extension of the Church's work. In the course of its growth its social and religious attitudes undergo development. In these processes its changing ethos increasingly enhances the opportunity of the Church. Judging by the present status of the Episcopal Church in the larger rural communities, it warrants the statement that the Church can occupy a real place in the religious life of a developing community. An exception obtains, of course, in the community which draws its growth mainly from a single racial group. In this type of growth the dominant religion of the group would practically exclude the activity of any other Church.

A notable trend has appeared in connection with the larger rural community. It shows that in many instances where a community is sufficiently removed from an urban center so that it has a noncompetitive trade area, it tends to grow to a population of ten thousand and then to stabilize at approximately that figure. Communities of this type offer an espe-

cially attractive opportunity for the Church.

The direction of the drift of population is significant. The population drift to the city has not been from rural farm and non-farm alike. The city increase has come in greater proportion from the village and town. The town increase has come almost wholly from the farm and small village. This direction of the drift is important to the Church. It is one explanation why the Church in the city has made exceptional gains, and it also explains why the Church in rural towns, with an increase of population, has scarcely held its own. The Church has been active in the rural town, and amongst the people who left the town for the city it is manifest that a good proportion of them were members of the Church. But the Church has not been as active in the open country and the people, therefore, who came from the farm and the little village to the town were not members of the Church. The Church losses from the rural town to the city had, therefore, no replacements in the population that moved from the farm and farm village into the town.

While the Church is suffering from its past failure to work in the open country and farm village, it appears that it has a new missionary opportunity offered to it in the rural town. This is now the most important and most populous segment

of the rural population.

The decadent community has declined because it lacked a continuing economic cohesiveness. Its trend has been towards population losses and the concomitant of community disintegration. The problem of the Church's work in a decadent community can have no single general principle applied to its solution. There are many towns of the decadent type in which the Church is so deeply rooted in the town's tradition that it forms a part of the community ethos. In such a situ-

ation the Church is of greatest importance to the spiritual life

of the people.

Except where the community is clearly underchurched, and this is a rare situation, it is inadvisable to open new work in a decadent community. The trend of the decadent community is towards a still further loss in population. Its religious and social attitudes have a tendency to become solidified and the denominational lines to become more firmly drawn. With the problem of the decadent community goes also the problem of the decadent church. The church problem has become so acute that diocesan authorities are having to face the question of abandoning their failing churches in this type of community. On what principle shall they operate? There are many angles to the problem. The factor of sentiment must be met. These failing churches may have had long honored pasts; they may have contributed excellent leaders to the larger life of the Church, and they may have been giving constantly of their communicant strength to city parishes. Coupled with these considerations is the fact that Bishops and departments of diocesan missions are more loath to give up the name of a church on their diocesan roster than they are to supply the missionary funds necessary to maintain it. The questions as to its potentialities in future church leadership and its ability to continue to contribute members to the city Church are always pertinent. One answer is contained in the prospect the Church has of supplying both leadership and growth from its present generation.

There are two methods of ministering to the Church people of a community where diocesan authorities have determined

that the withdrawal of support is warranted.

1. The property may be held and used for an unorganized mission. The Sacraments may be administered and pastoral oversight be given by a general missionary or the priest of a

near-by parish. In this method some definite provision should be made for the care of the church property. It is vastly better to have no church building at all than to have one that is

painfully deteriorating.

2. The preferable method is that of enlarging the bounds of a near-by parish so that it will include the area of the abandoned church. The new note in rural work is that of a ministry to an area and not merely to a community. Distance is much less a barrier than it was in the days when most of our present languishing mission stations were established. The neighborhood in horse-and-buggy days was a radius of five miles, but with the coming of automobiles and good roads it has been increased to a minimum of fifteen miles. Our original rural churches were established in a horse-and-buggy era. It would appear, therefore, that the automobile era should bring in a new type of diocesan missionary policy changed to meet a changed mode of transportation.

A method used in the "community church" town should be considered at this point. A satisfactory plan has been worked in several communities in co-operation with "community churches." These are communities that do not have an Episcopal Church, but where Church families reside. Provision is made whereby they use the church building for the visits of a priest to give Church people the sacramental ministrations of the Church. They are free to attend the religious services held under community auspices, and they join with other religiously minded people in the activities in which co-

operation raises no particular problem.

RURAL CHURCH SELF-SUPPORT

Self-support should be the goal for all long-established rural churches. Assistance from diocesan missionary funds should be made contingent on progress towards self-support. If there is no progress in this direction, an evaluation of the work and its future possibilities should be made. This should be done with the view to determining whether it is warranted in remaining as a charge upon the missionary funds of the diocese. By a release of funds gained through increasing self-support or by abandonment of hopeless work the diocese will be enabled to extend its work into new and more

promising areas.

Considered on the basis of per capita income for the nation, there is very little difference between the ability of city people and rural people to support their churches. The factor that militates against the rural church, and it is a most important one, is that the smaller unit, which is generally characteristic of the rural parish, makes self-support more difficult. One hiatus, however, often appears. A rural priest frequently serves in his several mission stations as many people as constitute a city parish. The city parish, in most instances, is self-supporting, whereas the combined income derived from the rural mission stations is rarely sufficient to provide for their priest's salary.

AREA PLAN

The goal of pastoral influence of the rural church should, in every case, be as extensive as the trade area. If the ministrations of the church are confined merely to the bounds of a community, it amounts to a neglect of the people who live in the crossroads settlements and on the farmsteads. These constitute an excellent field for the exercise of the pastoral ministry. They are not always religiously articulate because they have never been socially integrated in the life of the community nor assimilated into the plans and purposes of the church. Frequently they are in great need of both the social

and religious life of the Church. The death rate of open country churches was very pronounced in the last decade. Their situation, spiritually, has been made especially acute. Some of them associated themselves with the town church, but statistics show that new accessions to the town church have in no measure accounted for the total membership losses occasioned by the abandonment of these churches.

But an area plan for a diocese is more extensive than that of ministering to the trade area of a community. In many dioceses it may cover several counties. It contemplates that each rural priest shall have charge of a certain area rather than a certain number of communities in which the Church may have mission stations. The effort of the diocese should be towards covering with the pastoral services of a priest the entire population in its area. It may not involve increasing the number of services or even of holding services where the Church has not maintained an established work, but it does face the possibility of people who are spiritually underprivileged living in the area.

The preliminary work involved in setting an area plan in operation requires that the priest of the area shall make a careful pastoral survey of the area committed to his oversight. A survey of this type is not technical in any sense. It simply implies that he should visit in the communities where the Church is not carrying on work, with a view of studying their religious situation and of relating to the parish church of the area the people who are members of the Church or those who are unshepherded. His visits on the farmsteads will follow the same plan, with the added purpose of trying to relate isolated adults and children to a diocesan church for the isolated. It should be noted also that in some dioceses the clergy of city parishes accept pastoral areas that are contiguous to the city.

The assimilating of people in an area into the life of the Church must not devolve upon the pastor alone. He must have the help of active and interested members of the congregation. What might be described as old-fashioned neighborly visiting—of getting acquainted and of developing mutual social interests—is the broad base on which the effort should move. In one diocese, where the area plan has been in operation for several years, the people of rural parishes have entered enthusiastically into the visiting plan. They not only make stated visits, as a part of their volunteer work, but when they go out into the country for an auto ride, or even on a business trip by auto, they call by the rectory and find out whom, on their route, they may call upon. The rector has a supply of periodical and inexpensive church literature which he asks the parishioner to take to the isolated family. It is not surprising, with such an interest abroad in the diocese, that the number of people who have been associated with the church compares in size and activity to a large city parish. The strength that has been added to the diocese, and the service the Church has rendered to these isolated people could not have been made effective except through the pastoral area plan carried out in co-operation with the lay people of the established congregations. It must be borne in mind that rural people sometimes even on the outskirts of a community feel socially isolated. It is not until this barrier of isolation is broken down that the Church can serve adequately and receive the benefits from an extended horizon of the neighborhood.

CHURCH FOR THE ISOLATED

The Church's ministry to the isolated should be linked very closely with the area plan in a diocesan policy and program.

Various types of isolation prevail in our modern social life, and a diocesan policy will include them all in its ministry. None of them, however, is so acute and is more readily described by the term as the people who, because of distances, are unable to take their part in the spiritual fellowship with Christ and His Church. Many of them, because we have not provided opportunities through the Church for their spiritual growth, are spiritually undernourished.

The Church's greatest contribution to the isolated, of course, is definite spiritual ministrations. Diocesan lists of rural people have, however, a further value in pointing the way to the most strategic places for opening new mission stations. Likewise, all parishes in a diocese are constantly being strengthened through this ministry. People who move from isolated rural districts enter more normally into the life of a parish if they have been assimilated into the life of the Church

through its ministry to the isolated.

A diocesan committee is necessary. The work should be carried on through the services of a trained diocesan supervisor working under the direction, and with the counsel, of the committee. The diocese should also make budgetary provision for the expenses of the work. While it is ideally true that this work belongs primarily to the parishes and missions, yet not every area in the diocese can depend upon having a resident priest at all times, or, further, that he will have the time to find and train the local leadership that is necessary for carrying on the work. The work also involves a curriculum of religious instruction that calls for a secretarial service too great for a single pastor or congregation to carry. Experience has shown that diocesan leadership is necessary for the systematic co-ordination and prosecution of the work. Nothing is so deadening to the work as spasmodic attempts that are probable when the work is carried on by the parishes.

The primary source for a diocesan isolated list is the parish clergy. In the beginning of the plan, all the clergy of the diocese will be asked to send in the names of their isolated people. A more extensive effort can be initiated in a simple survey made through tax lists and auto license bureau lists. A form letter may be sent to all the isolated that are revealed by these lists. Many of the isolated may be related to some other religious group, but the effort will surely bring to light a group who will welcome the ministrations of the Church. Another plan of making the list more far-reaching is through keeping the plan before the people of the congregations. They will be encouraged to give the names of people they know to be cut off from the main stream of the Church's life. The list also grows from the inside. Isolated people who are receiving the ministrations of the Church are always interested in making the privileges they enjoy known to their friends and neighbors.

Every isolated family and individual should be considered members of the parish of the area in which they reside. They should be brought into as many of the interests and activities of the parish as possible. The clergy and the diocesan supervisor need to be in close touch with each other in order that their information and counsel may be a more mutual and co-

operating ministry.

The Department of Religious Education, through its manual, *The Church's Ministry to the Isolated*, supplies detailed instruction on setting up the plan for dioceses. The Department also supplies many excellent services on plans, programs, and courses of study for the use of diocesan supervisors. The Daughters of the King, who for several years have maintained a lively and a most helpful interest in the Church's rural work, have lately reinforced their effort by adding to their staff a secretary whose entire responsibility

will be that of promoting the ministry of the Church for isolated peoples.

LAY READERS IN THE RURAL FIELD

Reference has been made in Chapter II to the use of lay readers in the rural field. The discussion there concerned only the services they render in the parish or mission in which they reside. The plan here is concerned with the use of their services on a diocesan scale. Only one diocese in the Church (Michigan) has used the plan set forth below, but it has been in operation for several years. It has gathered backgrounds of experience and records of success to the extent that it can be confidently commended as a sound and practical plan.

The purpose of the plan is that of keeping open for regular services the rural churches which do not have the ministrations of a priest. Primarily, it may be regarded as a plan to supplement and strengthen the work of the archdeacon or general missionary. The diocese that does not possess a number of rural mission stations which can be cared for only by an archdeacon is the exception in the Church. These stations are usually small, and there is always a difficulty in associating them with a parish or mission which has a resident priest. Likewise, there are vacant rural churches that must be supplied with services and pastoral oversight. These vacancies usually arise from an interregnum between the departure of one priest and the arrival of a new one. The use of trained lay readers is the best means of meeting situations such as these.

They must be regarded as lay readers in diocesan service, and their work is to be done under the direction and the supervision of the Bishop or the archdeacon. The plan in the beginning can be undertaken more practically by using

laymen in city parishes. As the plan has been worked out in the Diocese of Michigan, most of the men are members of Detroit parishes. In the autumn the men gather for instruction and practice in their work. They meet twice a week for a period of two months. Their training consists of conducting the service, the delivery of sermons, Church school superintendence, and the elements of pastoral visiting and parish administration. Advanced work is provided for men who have been in the service for some time. Except for special reasons, the men are not licensed to prepare and deliver their own sermons. The priests in the diocese take the responsibility of preparing the sermons, and one sermon is mimeographed and sent to each lay reader for his use at the Sunday service. The lay readers go to their mission stations on Saturday afternoon and make calls on the families. They also utilize Sunday afternoon for calling. A small stipend, which does little more than cover traveling expenses, is paid by the mission to the lay reader.

More detailed plans of the lay readers' school, and the manner in which their work is carried on in the Diocese of Michigan, can be secured from the archdeacon of the diocese.

ASSOCIATE MISSIONS

The Church has often tried the associate mission plan, and while associate missions have flourished for a time, they have not enjoyed an enduring life. The chief difficulty of most associate missions, heretofore, has been a lack of sustained policy to keep them permanently recruited. They have generally been formed on the basis of the interests and the congeniality of a small group of priests who wished to work in the rural field. When the original group broke up, they left no plan for a perpetuation of the mission. Instead of the plan

being founded on this temporary basis, it should be made a part of a diocesan policy whereby the personnel of the mission is supplied by the Bishop of the diocese.

The workers in an associate mission are generally young men who have recently come out of the seminary, but the mission should have a director who is a mature and experienced priest. He must have a knowledge of rural work and competence to guide and train young priests in the rural ministry. The director may be a married man, and it may be possible for him to take his associates into his home. This plan would give the younger men the highly desirable advantage of normal home life. By being in the same home, the members of the mission would also be together for frequent counsel and planning of their work.

The advantages which commend the associate mission plan are numerous, but it is sufficient here to set down only a few

of the more important ones.

The associate mission gives training, under competent direction, to young priests who are exercising their ministry for the first time. It also assures the people of rural parishes a higher and more effective type of ministry. The rural ministry is just as demanding and exacting as the city ministry, and we should not be any more willing for young men to work in the rural field without direction than we are to have them work without direction in city parishes.

The devotional and intellectual interests of young men are better fostered in an associate mission than is possible for them in an isolated work. It is of greatest importance to them that their habits of prayer and study be conserved in the very beginning of their ministry. They need the comradeship of likeminded associates in order that all the implications of their lives as priests may not run the dangers of frustration.

The experience gained from associate missions of the past

testifies to the fact that three priests in an associate mission can cover considerably more territory and do the work of the Church a great deal more effectively than the same number of men working in isolated mission stations. The plan lends itself admirably to utilizing the special talents of men in the different phases of rural work. If one man has a particular equipment for organizing Church schools and young people, he can be given this responsibility. Another may be especially qualified for giving the congregation instruction in the music of the services. In all the plans of the associate mission the work of the members must be entirely co-operative, and by the concentrated effort on the whole field none of its parts is neglected.

The students of the General Theological Seminary have devised a very clearly articulated plan for their Associate Mission in the Missionary District of Salina. The plan has been carefully worked out in every detail, and it gives special attention to the factors which aim to make the mission a continuing enterprise in the life of the Church.

CONCLUSION

The rural pastor and his congregation are extremely vital to the life of the Church today: upon them depends very largely the future of the Church in the United States. The new element in rural areas may for a few years be variable factors in rural social life, but the Church must deal with them. Rural areas present matchless opportunities for an extension of the pastoral ministry. The traditional city approach to the work of the rural Church must be abandoned. It is not the parish, nor even the community, that should constitute the bounds of the rural Church's sphere of activity, but its concern for the souls of rural people should extend out



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upon the highways and up the side roads to the people on the farms and ranches. It must be made known to them that the Church cares and that they must have part in her work and worship.

The permanent character of the rural town and the trend towards a stabilized population in rural areas are now presenting an unparalleled opportunity for the future of the rural Church. The factor of the growth and stability of the rural town, coupled with the apparent dissatisfaction of rural peoples with the highly emotional type of religion, constitute the surest ground of hope for the future of the work of the Episcopal Church in rural areas. A sense of permanence as to the community and an attitude that the Episcopal Church is coming more and more to be congenial to rural peoples should give the Church all needed assurance for any renewed effort it makes to meet the new demands in rural work.

The Episcopal Church has never been regarded very widely or very seriously as a rural Church, and the theory has been held in some quarters that the day of our opportunity has passed. But whatever may have been our opinions in the past, and however deaf we may have been to the call of rural America, it now appears very clearly that in the social upheavals of the last few years the Episcopal Church has been given the opportunity of leading in a new and great pioneering effort for rural Christian civilization.

Copies of this book may be obtained from The Book Store, Church Missions House, 281 Fourth Avenue, New York, N. Y. Paper, 50c.; cloth, \$1.00. As this is not published for financial profit, the price is computed on a basis lower than that necessarily used by commercial houses.

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